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ELEVENTH SERIES, No. 1.

OUR THOUGHT OF GOD

BY

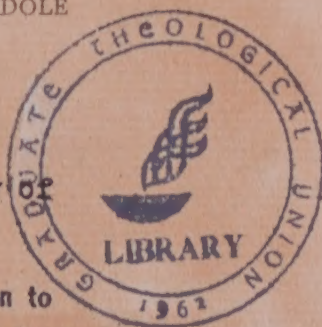
REV. CHARLES F. DOLE

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OUR THOUGHT OF GOD.

Can we ever be sure of the fact of God? Can we be as sure, for example, as we are sure of the existence of our friend whom we see and talk with every day? The thinkers and the men of religion tell us that God is the central fact in the universe, that he is the only reality, without whom all else would vanish, that he is present everywhere. If the voices of religion are true, if God really is, we ought surely to be easily made aware of him!

Observe that there is no such difficulty as once hindered men from knowing God. Men once conceived of God as living at a distance and ruling the world by deputies. You might go to him when you died, you might see him in heaven; but you could not expect to see him here. You could only be sure of him, if at all, because you had been told about him. We do not say this any longer. If he is anywhere, he is here. If we can ever be sure of him in another life, we can be sure of him in this present life. If in any honest sense prayer or communion is real, it must be because each soul of us has direct access to the universal life. It is this or nothing. And all the greatest affirmations of religion assure us that it is precisely this.

What obstacle, then, prevents us from being as sure of God as we are sure of our nearest friend? Let us search for our innermost doubt. We cannot see God's face, we cannot touch his hand, we cannot hear his voice, as we see, touch, and hear in the case of our friend. Is this true? Recollect that we never see or touch or hear the soul of our friend.

That which thinks, wills, aspires, and loves, is beyond sight or sense. He, too, never quite sees us. Our senses are only so many avenues of approach to each other. Nevertheless, they suffice. We are perfectly sure of each other's thought and love and reality.

What we wish to suggest is that we do see, touch, and hear God as truly at least as we see, touch, and hear in the case of our friend. Our friend has a few familiar aspects of his face, a few motions of his body, a few tones of his voice. God has infinite aspects, motions, and voices. Our friend at times perplexes us with words, looks, deeds, which for the moment do not seem to accord with his character. Nevertheless, at his best, all apparent inconsistencies dissolve, and we love one another. In his unity, heart and soul and mind, he is our good friend. At our best, we see and know the perfect and full-grown man,—the soul of our friend.

It is just so in our knowledge of God. There are moments, there are aspects, there are motions, which perplex us. How should there not be in an infinite nature? Yet at our best, when we see clearest, when the great laws come into view, when the eternal motions are visible, when the voices of God speak their deeper message of harmony and unity, our souls rest in God as truly as ever the thoughts of ancient Psalmists rested in the Eternal. Have we not heard God in the forest or by the ocean or in the mighty inspired music of Bach or Beethoven or Brahms? Whom else did we hear? Have we not been in touch with God when our hands have clasped the hands of the faithful, the high-minded, the merciful, in a common bond of allegiance? Was it not allegiance to the Spirit of the universe, making itself felt in actual presence? Have we not seen God in skies and stars, in snow crystals and flowers, in the eyes of little children, and often in the smile of love which would give all for our sake? Where else, except out of the heart

of the universe, did this wonderful light of love gleam upon us? Yes! we are poor, if we have not many a time stood in the presence chamber of the Eternal. Do we not always stand there? Can we ever flee from his presence? Do we not then know — what the fact is — that we live in God's world, and, indeed, are his children?

You thus see that we may be at least as sure of God as we are of our nearest friends. We are indeed assured of the presence and reality of God in the same way as we are made aware of any personality. Through the display of power, through the sight of endless worlds traversed by Law and bound together into Unity, through scenes of matchless order and beauty, through marvellous harmonies of music, through the light of friendly Love, shining upon us, we are daily made aware of God, the ever-present Spirit of the Universe. What are all these mighty and beautiful manifestations, except his messages to us? How better could he speak to us?

Longer tracts on many subjects may be had free by addressing the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

GOD WITHIN US.

BY REV. CHARLES F. DOLE.

Tennyson in lines often quoted says :—

“Speak to Him thou, for he hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.”

This is not merely a fine poetic fancy. We know nothing, if this is not so. Let us question our consciousness, and discover what it answers to our examination. What are we? What subtle mysteries do we find wrapped up in ourselves? We find, first, the mystery of force or power. I lift an arm, or I run. What makes the motion? The certainty is that I do not make it myself. I only use it. I turn on or release force, I share in the force of the world. I no more create it in my own body than I create it, as it drives the wheels of a mill,

I find in myself the mystery of life. When did it begin? Whence did it proceed? Through its mysterious breath, I live; but I am only its creature. Did the primeval atoms of matter combine to produce this miracle of life? What endowed these atoms, then, with this divine power of creation? What are the invisible atoms, that they should agree to unite and build me? The atoms are many. Life is one, as force is. Life rules and orders the atoms. I share life as I share power.

I think, I am conscious, my senses tell me their message; and I understand, I enjoy order and beauty, I put thoughts together. I rise from the sight of the parts to the idea of

the whole. What makes this marvel of thought? I do not make it. It seems to play through my mind, as life plays through my body. Never are my thoughts my own. I only think as I am told. At my best and clearest, it is as if some one were dictating to me, and I were answering back, "Yes, I understand it is so." The clearness of my thought varies, as the tide of health or life, physical, intellectual, and moral, rises and falls.

It is given to me to perceive the issues of right and wrong. An urgency of duty or conscience presses upon me, compelling me often to go counter to every animal instinct within me. This is no force of my own. I did not create it. It is something like life which I share. As Matthew Arnold has said, it is "a Power not ourselves making for righteousness." But I am as sure of this inner Power as I am sure of my own existence. It is in other men as it is in me. It is universal.

Love wakens in our hearts. It lifts us with our childishness, our petty prides and conceits, our stupid selfishness, as the ocean lifts the great ships. It is of one nature in all of us. Did any one of us create his love? No more than we created the breath of life or set the blood coursing in our veins. It is a primal mystery. Yet nothing is so real. Take love away, and we should cease to be men. We should not even be animals, were it not for this universal life-force throbbing in us, and breaking all bonds, to give, to serve, to pour itself out.

Once more, we find in ourselves what we call will. It is in us not merely to hunger and thirst, to feel, to think, to desire, and to love, but to stoutly resolve to dare, and to do. We call will the central fact of personality. In the act of will, power, thought, conscience, love, life, all march together as one. We are constituted as persons in our acts of will. With a single proviso: Our will must be good will.

Is it ever an *he-will* or a selfish will? Then it is as if the train moved off the track, or the ship went, with dismantled yards, to wreck. Only good will holds us in the sure, safe lines of real personality. Good will alone unifies our lives, and gives them rest and joy.

Whence now comes this splendid element of will, through which at our best we share the forces of the universe and are admitted into its secrets, which, even at our worst, still communicates power and motion for a little while to the derailed wheels of the car of our life? Did one of us ever create his own will, — least of all his good will? It is like force and thought and life and love. Will is likewise in us, playing through us, making us what we are. We share and use and enjoy it, but it is in fact a universe force. The law of its coming is to use it, and pour it through us. The law of its going is like the law of life, to cease to employ it.

Why do we speak any longer of force, thought, life, love, will, as if they were abstract and impersonal? These great words — mysteries though they are — describe reality and belong to persons. It is hardly tenable that force could be, except as a person put it forth. It is not tenable that life, even in an amoeba or a seed, could be, except as a person manifested himself through the tiny form of life. But it is incredible that there should be thought or justice or love or will, except as we mean a thinking, righteous, loving and willing person.

These terms have no significance in the abstract. My thought is I thinking, my justice is I owning moral obligation, my love is I loving some one, my will is I resolving to express my love.

See now how we have been talking of God at every point. The power, the life, the thought, the justice, the love, the will, within me, are so many names of God, the one and only complete Person in the universe. I use power, I per-

ceive and know, I feel the pressure of conscience, I love, and I determine to do what love bids. Every throb, every motion, every thought, every aspiration, every impulse of sympathy, every righteous act, is God, acting, urging, whispering, and living within me. What else is it? How otherwise can I explain myself? How could I possibly be a person, albeit imperfect and still in the process of making, unless the real and infinite Person informed and inspired me? How could man's tiny dynamo act, or his little instrument spell out its messages, except for the unlimited ocean of power sweeping through his coils and charging his wires? So, surely, all is of God.

True! All of God is not here or there, at least to our finite perception; sometimes the display of power only, sometimes his beauty, but not also his love; sometimes lessons of thought, but not yet the voice of his goodness. The human medium cannot contain all of him. The feeble wire, poorly connected, only partially carries the flood of the divine forces. Nevertheless, at our highest, when we are most truly men,—that is, persons also like God,—in other words, his children,—when the tide of his mighty life rises to its fullness in mind and soul, when we gladly think his thoughts after him, when we go freely with his motions of conscience, when we love with all our hearts and our wills, and are one with his good will, then we know by innermost testimony, and no longer at second hand, what the unknown Greek poet long ago saw,—that literally “in him we live and move and have our being.” We know what the most spiritual of the New Testament writers said,—“God is Love”; and “every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.”

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ELEVENTH SERIES, No. 3.

WHAT IF WE BELIEVE IN GOD?

BY

REV. CHARLES F. DOLE



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

WHAT IF WE BELIEVE IN GOD?

Perhaps you think that it makes little practical difference what we think about God, or even if we do not believe in God at all. True, if our idea of God is of some absent Being, of whose existence we only can know at second hand. In this case real life is not to be looked for here in this world. But suppose for a moment what all the great teachers in religion have always confidently alleged, and what is now everywhere coming into our modern religious consciousness,—namely, that God is here and now,—realize then that all our lesser lives arise in him, and are essentially spirit; that is, Power, Thought, Will, and Love, as God's life is. Conceive what must now be true, that the life of each one of us is rich or poor, abundant or meagre, in proportion as the life of God flows in us freely or not, and see what such an idea begins to do for us.

In the first place the deepest instinct in us is to desire life. Life is power, satisfaction, and joy.

“ 'Tis life of which our nerves are scant,
More life, and fuller, that we want.

Show us the secret of life, and we will be content, But, as surely as God is here, the secret of life is perfectly plain. It is to let him do his good will with us, body and soul. It is to obey, first, his physical laws, and to yield our bodies to the flow of his health in us. His life forces seek to have free circulation within us. Give them their rhythmic motion. The

deep, full, fearless, restful breathing is a sign and token of our obedience to this law.

The secret of life, next, is to dismiss pride, conceit, prejudice, and to give our minds to the complete possession of truth. Every truth is God's voice or word within us. What do we want except the truth? How should we ever fear it as hurtful? Let it do what it will with us. Give it room, give it utterance and expression, speak it, embody it. Its law is, the more you receive, the more you express it, the more your mind enlarges toward it. See! truth is God's life. At every instant when we see truth, we see God, we hear God. Do you think it makes no practical difference with us whether or not we catch this sublime conception? Say rather that, as often as this idea comes, with one splendid rush of intellectual health it sweeps away every vestige of bigotry and egotism.

Again, Divine Goodness seeks to have its will with us. The tidal force of righteousness seeks to pour through us. This force is God. When conscience urges, this is the life of God, closer to us than the air which we breathe. Do you think it makes no difference whether or not we believe this majestic fact? When we thus believe, we cannot resist the beautiful motion. We do not dare, we have no wish to disobey. Our one prayer is now to do justice, and never to cease to do justice. To do justice is to be alive with the life of the universe. To do wrong is to shut life out of our doors.

The innermost secret of life is to love. We have said that God is love. Is it conceivable that it makes no practical difference whether or not we believe this? When we do not believe it, we are not half alive. When we see this, it is as if the universe were behind, lifting us. It is as if an infinite Friend were at our side and holding our hands. We give ourselves to the motion of the sublime good will; and we are in that instant alive,—complete men, sons of God. Did

any one ever try this, and find it to fail? Ask yourselves at what times you have most completely lived, at what times you have best known peace, gladness, and the fulfilment of your being. Were not these the times when Good-will, or Love, had free course in you, and you only did what God bade you do? Here is the magic key to the understanding of all human acts. Do you imagine it is not the most practical fact whether or not you possess the wonderful key? Here is the secret of Jesus. It is the secret of all the noble and true-hearted. How else do you explain their lives? Suppose you took their secret: do you think it would make no practical difference with your life? I say it would make what Dante called the New Life.

Thus at every point we discover that the finite human life depends upon the actual and present God. Bind the body, impede the circulation, sit down in idleness and let the blood stagnate, and the physical life runs low and death threatens. Shut off the mind from the sight of truth, fill it with its own conceits, close it from the free sunshine, and, lo! there is no intellectual health in us. Cease to listen to conscience, throw the tiny life off the trolley of duty, isolate yourself, seek your small personal will, and all the life in you drains down to that of the beast. It is hell when no fresh currents of good-will invigorate the soul of man. God's life is that which quickens the nerves of the body. His life is that which constitutes thought: this life, welcomed within us, fills our souls with joy as of heaven. Shall we not, then, believe the most beautiful fact, the innermost law of our being? Shall we not, then, joyously do what the good law commands? Shall we not open our hearts to the inflow of the loving Life of the universe?

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GOD LOVES ALL SOULS.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

“All souls are mine.” Blessed declaration of the God-inspired Ezekiel! All souls.—of the great and the humble, the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the king and the slave, the pure child and the abandoned woman, the soul of the apostle John and the soul of Judas Iscariot,—all belong to God. He will take care of what is his. He will leave no child orphaned. Those who are trodden down and forsaken in this world,—he watches their sorrowful lives, and will cause them to bring forth fruit at last. Thus does God love all souls with a universal, unwearied, unfailing affection. Thus did Christ love all souls, gathering around him the publicans, Pharisees, and sinners, the pious and the profane. And thus, if we are Christians, we shall love all souls, calling no man common or unclean, believing in the brotherhood of the race, finding something good in every one,—a vital seed of nobleness in the most deadened bosom; and, in thus loving other souls, our own souls will be blessed. While we forget ourselves, God will remember us. While we seek to save others, we, too, shall be safe.

We may throw ourselves away; but God will not throw us away. We belong to him still; and he “gathereth up the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost.” In order to become pure, we may need sharp suffering; and then God will not hesitate to inflict it. In the other life, as in this, he

will chasten us, not for his pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. It is thus that God's love for the soul, and its worth, appear eminently, in that he will not let us destroy ourselves. When we pass into the other world, those who are ready, and have on the wedding-garment, will go in to the supper. They will find themselves in a state of being where the faculties of the body are exalted and spiritualized, and the powers of the soul are heightened; where a higher truth, a nobler beauty, a larger love, feed the immortal faculties with a divine nourishment; where our imperfect knowledge will be swallowed up in larger insight; and communion with great souls, in an atmosphere of love, shall quicken us for endless progress. Then faith, hope, and love will abide.—faith leading to sight, hope urging to progress, and love enabling us to work with Christ for the redemption of the race.

Let us rejoice, friends, in these great hopes. Let us praise God for his creating, educating, and saving love. Let us rejoice that the lost souls—lost to earth, lost to virtue, lost to human uses here—are not lost to God; that he still holds them in his hand. Let us rejoice that those who will not be led to him by blessings and joy shall be led to him by anguish, pain, and suffering. Let us rejoice that the glory of heaven and the fires of hell shall both serve God,—both work together for good.

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ELEVENTH SERIES, No. 5.

WE NEED TO KNOW GOD

BY

REV. J. F. CLARKE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

WE NEED TO KNOW GOD.

We can spare anything else better than our faith in God. To live without God in the world is to live without hope in the world.

Not less, but more, of religion is what we need. To see God only as power may lead to a religion of superstition. To see him only as law may despoil our life of warmth and glow. To see the divine life only in the beauty of nature and art may end in a sentimental religion, lacking moral force. To see God only in the law of duty may result in a hard, technical, and merely moral religion. To see him only in the soul may end in a mystical religion. To see him only in Christ tends to a narrow, intolerant, and formal religion.

And, therefore, we need to go forward, not backward, into a larger sea of thought, love, and life. We need to find God as the fulness, filling all in all. Let us see him in science, in universal law, giving vitality to all our knowledge, and making nature more divinely fair. Let us see him in all the duties of our daily life, glorifying their humblest details with the warmth of devotion and the tenderness of a father's love. Let us see him in the depths of our own soul; in the mysteries of our being, a light shining in the darkness. illuminating our reason with a reason more divine.

Man is not himself when away from God. Man needs for growth and development, for the full action of his powers, the sense of the divine presence and the divine love. The man who has no faith in God is only half a man. Half of his nature, and that the higher half, is passive and dormant.

He is away from his true home, a poor wanderer in a foreign land.

In the irreligious man the higher nature is asleep or dead. The conscience is stupefied, the reason sophisticated, faith enslaved to superstitious beliefs. The love of truth is often perverted into the love of error, fault-finding, captious criticism, perpetual denial. When he becomes a religious man, what takes place? He says, "I will arise and go to my Father." He has come to believe that he has a Father and a Friend to whom he can go, on whom he can rely, in whom he may trust.'

Draw near, then, in faith, to this great, overflowing fountain of heavenly compassion. God has put into our hearts his spirit, to enable us all to say "Our Father!" Let nothing separate us from his love,—neither life nor death, nor our own folly and sin, our own weakness and ignorance, our own doubt or unbelief. Let us not be troubled by harsh doctrines. God asks for none of these things at our hands. Sacrifice and offering he does not require,—not the sacrifice of our own reason before unintelligible mysteries. He says only this, "My son, give me thy heart!" And, to enable us to do so, he shows his own love to every soul that he has made,—shows how he leaves the ninety-and-nine sheep, and goes into the wilderness after the one that is lost; how he so loved the world as to give the only one who had risen to the height of perfect sonship — his only Son — to bring the same sense of a Father's love to the rest of his children. He allowed this dearest child to die in torture and shame, that we, by that solemn sacrifice, might be lifted out of darkness into marvellous light. So now we can behold in all his gifts this unspeakable gift of a fatherly love. Now every outward blessing has in it a touch of divine tenderness. Now we see in the universe not only beauty and wonder, power, order, law, but, interfused with and penetrating all things,—that

highest of all,— a divine love. Hold fast to it: let it not go, for it is your life! To trust in the Father's love is the gospel within the gospel: it is the inmost secret of Christ; it is the way, the truth, and the life.

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ELEVENTH SERIES, No. 26.

STILLING THE TEMPEST

BY

REV. JULIAN C. JAYNES

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

STILLING THE TEMPEST.

The incarnations of the Almighty are everywhere and in everything !

That is the revelation for us to-day. Not an incarnation here and there, not some lone individual aflame with divinity standing on the mountain top, and all the multitude below like so many clods of the earth, but the whole wide world a living, palpitating manifestation of the divine life. I do not mean that all are equally endowed. I do not mean that one man is as full of divinity as any other man. There are great waves and small waves on the surface of the sea ; but they all rise up out of the same vast deep, and they all flash back the sunlight of the heavens above. And so, however much men may vary, they are all, according to their capacity, instruments of the divine will and bearers of the divine light.

Now let us carry this thought of the incarnation a little farther. Let us see how the power of God in man is beautifying the earth and conquering sin and transfiguring human character. I turn to the life of Jesus to tell the story for me,—not because he stands apart from creation, not because the quality of his divinity was any different from yours or mine, but because of all the children of men he was one of the ripest, fullest expressions of God. I turn to that simple account of his stilling the tempest on the Sea of Galilee.

The Master was asleep in the boat, and the disciples were quietly tending the oars and the sail, when all at once the storm-cloud beat down upon them and wrapped them in

darkness and a fury of angry waters and tongues of flame. Waking amid all that confusion of frightened men and roaring elements, he stretches forth his hand, and at the word of command the sunlight breaks, the thunder ceases, and a peaceful silence settles upon the troubled sea. It is a beautiful and suggestive story. Do not ask me if I believe it. I hope we have grown beyond the need of asking a question like that. I am glad I do not have to believe it. Make it a fact, and it sinks into a piece of divine magic. Make it the child of the loving imagination of his disciples, and then it becomes full of beauty and symbolical meaning. It then tells us of God incarnate in man come to rule the material forces of the earth. It then symbolizes to us the divinity of the human soul mastering the storm-cloud and quelling the fury of the great deep. Just see how true it is as a type of what man can do under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit. Look how he has conquered the savagery of nature and glorified the face of the earth. Once it was a rude and tangled wilderness. Once its treasures were unknown, its forces unused, its marvels and beauties feared instead of loved and appreciated. And then the divine spark flamed up in the human soul, and the wondrous change began. The son of God went forth to do his Father's will. He spoke to the valley, and it brought him bread. He spoke to the mountain, and it brought coal and iron and silver and gold. He dreamed a dream, and on the morrow his splendid cities were glowing in the sunlight.

He sailed his ships into the eye of the storm. He harnessed the rivers to the wheels of his mill. He stretched his industries, like golden chains, across the world. He caught the lightning, and sent it to whisper his message beneath the sea. He imprisons the invisible steam behind his iron pistons, and it becomes his faithful servant. He must give his thought to the world; and, lo! the marvel of

the printed page comes forth. He must tell the music of his soul, and instruments without number appear at his creative touch. He must fix the vision of beauty that he sees, and the glowing canvas carries that vision to a million eyes besides his own. He takes all of these rude elements of the earth, all of these fierce, untamed forces of sea and sky and land, and compels them to do what God has whispered in his soul. It is the revelation of God to man. It is the revelation of man to God. Go watch some great Atlantic liner, under the guidance of a single hand, swinging away from her dock and making for the open sea. Go stand before the jewelled façade of St. Mark's in Venice. Go into the galleries of the Old World, where Art has told her story. Go into yonder great library, where lie embalmed the thought and prophecy of human genius. Go stand for one evening hour on that mighty bridge of New York, swung hundreds of feet in the air,—a world of flashing lights as far as the eye can reach, and all repeated in the reflections of the swirling tide below,—and you will understand what the incarnation means. Out of the depths of your soul you will cry: "How wonderful is man! Thou hast made him only a little lower than the angels." And then, as you look up at the great vaulted sky, set with the eternal stars, you shall hear a voice saying: "This is my son in whom I am well pleased. I set the thought burning in his brain. I kindled the fire of aspiration in his soul. He has not been disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

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THE TEMPTATION.

BY REV. JULIAN C. JAYNES.

The great temptation! What a picture it is! The wide, bleak desert, and this sad, untried young man, worn out with fasting and inward strife, waiting there for the crucial trial of his life. And then the gates of hell open, and Satan comes forth to battle with the Son of God. He first appeals to his physical necessities, and tempts him with the creature comforts of life. Then he tries him on the side of his self-trust. Then, once more, he turns his attack on his ambition, and says, "All the kingdoms of the world are yours, if you will only fall down and worship me." And now hear the strong, indignant answer to all this: "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." There is the picture of human temptation, of human struggle, of human victory. It is again only a symbol of what is going on everywhere in the world,—not this time the conquest of material things, but the conquest of the spiritual powers of evil that lurk in human life. It is God the Father empowering his child to withstand the things that enfeeble and debase him. It is the incarnation of divine resistance against the forces of sin.

I do not pause to discuss the nature of evil or to explain whence it came. It is enough for us to know that it is here, so strong, so alluring, so omnipresent, that I do not wonder that tempted and tried humanity has believed in a prince of darkness who delights in the overthrow of purity and goodness and virtue. It is everywhere, tempting us in our appetites and passions, tempting us in our desires and ambitions, tempting us even on the highest level of thought and feeling.

It is always laying hold of our garments, trying to drag us back into the lower ranges of life. And what, pray, would our poor, besieged humanity do if there were no communication between God and men? What would the wandering child do without a sense of its Father's presence? What, but to be hopelessly lost. What, but to sink back into moral stupor, without strength, without vision, without ideals.

It is because God has incarnated himself in man that man is able to see the right and struggle toward it. It is because the divine resistance is in our hearts that we are able to smite the evil one. To us all this power is given. You know it is there. You have felt its uplift in many a trial. You have heard its voice again and again when you were tempted, when you were in despair, when you were ready to throw down the standard and desert the field. You have heard its voice shaming your cowardice and bidding you rise up and hold yourself pure or patient or brave or strong. That is what the Divine Spirit has been doing with all men in all time.

I cannot think of the incarnation without thinking of its moral lift in the history of the race,—how it has drawn men step by step away from brutality and sensual things; how it has led them little by little into the ways of the spirit; how it has taught them century by century to subdue selfishness, to break the chains of passion, to slay the devils of cruelty and avarice; how it has, more and more, as the years have gone on, multiplied the company of saints and heroes and noble, unsullied lives, until their name is legion and their number as the sands of the sea.

That was a wondrous victory,—the victory of man over the physical strength of the earth. But a grander victory still is this age-long conquest of the spirit of selfishness by the spirit of God in man.

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ELEVENTH SERIES, No. 28.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

BY

REV. JULIAN C. JAYNES

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

You hear God in the tempest, but you may hear him also in the whisperings of the evening breeze. You see him in the purple and gold of the sunset, but you see him also in the tiny ray that streams through your window lattice. You behold him incarnated in Buddha, changing a prince's robe for a beggar's rags; in Socrates, bestowing jewels of wisdom upon ungrateful Athens; in Jesus, with peaceful brow and forgiving lips, dying for truth amid the Jewish rabble. But you also see him incarnated in the face of the little child at your knee, in the simple beauty of humble, earnest lives, in the forms of men and women everywhere who are walking the earth on missions of love and usefulness.

The incarnation of God in great and small, in high and low,—that is the condition of his existence for us to-day. For let me ask: How else could God tell himself to the world? How else could you hear his voice and see his face? You might write his attributes all over the sky; and yet, if you could not see them personified in human life, they would mean nothing to you. You might reason out his existence by the processes of philosophy; and yet, if you could not meet him in flesh and blood, that existence would be a cold and empty form of thought.

God himself would be helpless without this universal incarnation. "It is only through personality that personality can be revealed." It is only to character that character can be told. Luther said that "God was omnipotent, but that he needed men and women to help him." That is forever true. Make God all power and love and justice and beauty,

and yet, if there were no continuous incarnation, his ministrations to the world would cease. He could not speak or act or do his work in human life unless there were human hearts and minds and human hands and feet to do his will.

Let us study the transfiguration from this point of view. You know the story,—how Jesus took Peter and James and John, and climbed up the mountain side to pray, and, as they waited there in the silence, behold, a light shone round about them and they saw the face of the Master as the face of an angel. You have seen it all pictured by the magic brush of Raphael,—the mountain top, the mysterious light, the worshipping disciples, and the attendant spirits of the prophets, the beatific figure of the Christ, and down below the upturned faces of a multitude of sick and suffering humanity. Those upturned faces, I think, are the key to the secret of the whole scene. It is the meeting of love and sorrow, of compassion and misery; and by it love is transfigured and sorrow turned into joy. It was the love of Jesus going out to his crippled brethren that glorified him as it passed. It was the divine pity of God shining through him down into the troubled heart of the world that made the face of Jesus as the face of an angel in the eyes of his disciples. That, to me, is the explanation of the Transfiguration; and I need no other. For I see it every day. I see men and women all around me who are being transfigured by the love and benevolence shining out of their hearts. You see it also,—nay, you have been transfigured yourselves. You have done some kindness or lifted some burden or touched some wound of life with healing hand, and you have come back with a stronger sense of joy and tenderness in your heart. That was the transfiguration of an hour. You have undergone some long temptation or borne some heart-breaking sorrow; and you have come out of it all victorious, only to become more pitiful toward others and more anxious

to give the hand of help. That was the transfiguration of the whole life.

And so it is everywhere. The world is all aglow with the light of blessed, helpful lives. We see them in our homes, in our streets, in all the ways of life. All who are easing the pain of other hearts, all who are leading wandering feet back into paths of safety, all who are trying to mend the fragments of some shattered soul, all who are lovingly, humbly trying to bring joy and peace to men,—all are standing on the mount of transfiguration, — though they know it not,—and round them shines the heavenly light, and from their faces beams the love of God. This is the highest of all. This is the climax of the process of incarnation here on the earth, the transformation of the human into the divine, the transfiguration of man with the glory of the spirit. So it runs through all the history of humanity,—first the struggle with the earth, then the struggle with the animal instincts, then the struggle to bring in the kingdom of heaven. So it runs through the life of the individual man,—first the conquest of physical forces, then the conquest of the demons of self, and then the victorious life going back to win the cause of those who have fought and been defeated.

This is the story of God's gift of himself to the world. This is the gospel of the incarnation,—God working through human minds and hearts to reveal his love and to bring heaven upon the earth. It is no new gospel. It tells you what you know already, that you are the children of the Most High, that you bear in your hearts the impress of his spirit, that you are the temples of the Holy One. And out of that solemn, awful truth let there rise the strong resolve that, since God is in you, you will make yourselves a fit dwelling-place for all God-like things.

Longer tracts on many subjects may be had free by addressing the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

ELEVENTH SERIES, No. 51.

WHAT IS HEAVEN?

BY

REV. J. F. CLARKE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

WHAT IS HEAVEN?

When we seek to know what heaven is to be in the next world, we must ask what it is here. For, certainly, the kingdom of heaven comes also in this world. There are hours of heavenly peace in this life: we sit sometimes in heavenly places with Jesus even now. Heaven is the peace of God which passeth understanding.

This heaven below comes from the three elements which are to abide,—faith, hope, and love. Faith means the sight of the invisible reality which is below the passing appearance. It is the evidence of the reality of truth, goodness, wisdom. We endeavor to know, because we believe there is really something to be known. Faith, therefore, is the condition of knowledge. And what a joy and peace come to the soul from knowledge! Knowledge of the laws of the universe, knowledge of the divine work in history, knowledge of our capacity of improvement, knowledge of Christ as a personal friend and benefactor!

Knowledge abides in the other world because faith abides,—faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Here we see as in a glass darkly, there face to face. We may there learn to understand the nature of life, the nature of the soul, the enigma of moral freedom, the cause and reason of the existence of evil, all which are hidden from us here. But, as knowledge enlarges, faith will extend itself further, and root itself more deeply in the soul. Far beyond what we know will be our trust in the unknown abysses of divine being.

And hope also will continue in the other life; and this means that there will be progress hereafter as well as here. To hope means to look forward to something better; but, unless that something better can be reached, the hope must perish. Therefore, continued hope implies continued progress. It means constant growth and development. It means ever-increasing knowledge, activity, power; ever-increasing capacity for spiritual improvement; a never-ceasing ascent toward God,—powers growing more angelic, activity becoming more divine.

And we may say as the surest of all certainties that love will abide,—love of those who are above us in grandeur and beauty; love for those who are beside us in sympathy and fellowship; love toward those who are most helpless and needy, the souls which sit furthest down in darkness and the shadow of death.

Love here is one of the best things we have; but love here is only in its rudiments. What may it not become in the other world, when we shall be lifted into communion with the wise, the good, the noble, the beautiful, who have gone up and on; when we shall be surrounded by their sympathy, blessed by their friendship; when Christ shall come to find us with the angels and archangels; and when we, in our mansion, in our sphere, shall be able to work with them in theirs for the advancement and redemption of the universe.

The wonderful description of charity by the apostle Paul is not rhapsody or declamation; nor is it the account of an ideal, super-angelic state, impossible for us here, but to be reached in some heavenly world. This divine power of love is possible for us all. Only let the love of God and man enter the soul, and you have in you the elements here described. You will find it not difficult to "suffer long and be kind." It will seem a simple thing not to envy, not to boast, not to behave unseemly, not to be always seeking your own.

Whereas before you were easily provoked, now you smile at provocation, and are unruffled by injury. You become able to "bear all things," to "believe all things," to hope for all good in the midst of evil, and to "endure all things" to the end, patient because sure that the Lord reigns.

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ELEVENTH SERIES, No. 52.

HOW TO GET ETERNAL LIFE

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

HOW TO GET ETERNAL LIFE.

The problem of human existence may be stated thus: How can we change time into life? In some men the mental, moral, and spiritual life and energy continues to increase so long as they remain in this world. While the body is growing old, mind and heart remain young. While the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day.

Time cannot be detained; but, while it is passing, we may be able to change it into something which will last always,—that is, immortal or undying life, or what the Scriptures call eternal life. For immortal life, eternal life, means that kind of life which does not decay and change,—not future existence, but present fulness of being. Bodily life decays with years; but all of immortal life we have within us will last unchanged, never growing old, never wearing out. Our business is to change the bodily existence, measured by time, into spiritual existence belonging to eternity.

God is in nature; and so the man who loves and studies nature receives life from that study.

But God is also present in man. Those who are interested in their fellow-beings, who are laboring for the progress of humanity, seeking to save the lost, advocating reforms, helping their neighbors,—they also become full of life. They are in communion with God, and drinking at the great source of eternal life.

The years, as they pass on, are changed into life, partly by God's providence and without any effort of ours. It is

done by a law of our nature. God has so made us that, while we grow old in one way, we grow young in another way; while we are becoming more weak in body, we grow more strong in spirit. That is the natural tendency of things, if we do not oppose it by our own wilfulness. If we accept patiently and trustingly what comes to us from God, there comes with it an inward strength and peace. What we have to add on our part is trust, submission, fidelity. Let us be loyal to our work, whatever it is. Whatever our hand finds to do, let us do it with our might. Let us forget the things behind, — disappointment, sorrow, the unkindness of others, remorse over ourselves. Leave them behind, and reach out to things before, to deeper knowledge, larger usefulness, purer love. And so, while the outward man perishes, the inward man will be renewed day by day.

One of the most convincing arguments for immortality is the undying appetite of the soul for knowledge, love, progress. As we approach the term of life, it never occurs to us that it is time to fold our arms, close our eyes, and bid farewell to nature, poetry, art, friendship, business. As long as our faculties permit, we take exactly the same interest in life as if we were to live fifty years longer.

I think that, if we have a sincere desire to know and to serve God, the years change our religion into life. We cease to harass ourselves or others much about mere questions of dogma or sect. A very few central truths satisfy us. Trust in God, love to man, are enough. Our prayers cease to be formal, and become a habit of the soul, — waiting on God, looking to him for strength, dwelling in his infinite peace. Our faith in Christ turns to love. What to us are questions about his nature, whether supernatural or not, about his transcendental or primeval being? We know that our joys and our sorrows touch his heart; that, when we wrong man, we wrong him; when we help man, we help him. We all,

in our different phrases, still look to him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We learn to see in Jesus not Master and Lord only, but tender Brother and blessed Friend. We obey him best when we are true to what is right and good.

“Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee.”

So Christianity becomes a reality and a part of our life. It ceases to be profession, and becomes strength and peace. The outward part may perish, but the inward part is renewed day by day.

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SURETIES OF LIFE AFTER DEATH.

BY REV. E. P. PRESSEY.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" The question is not a modern one. But in a peculiar sense it was a nineteenth century one. Then first common sense and scientific color were given it by the Agnostic school, represented by Robert G. Ingersoll for the uneducated and Thomas Huxley for the educated minds. Yet even these never answered the question in the negative. Their word was, "I do not know."

Their doubts are valuable, but they are not convincing. Now there is a good argument for the non-existence of matter, but I am far from being convinced that matter does not exist. If it is not matter, then it is something else, that might as well be called matter. If what I call living beings do not continue to exist in full life, with all their qualities, then something else happens to them, of which I have not the slightest notion. I cannot imagine by what process a living being could manage to get out of existence. I prefer while I am in this world to take it for no liar, as I am no liar, and to believe that things are what they seem, — that matter is matter, life is life, and that they stand for everlasting and different realities.

I do not stickle at the mere disappearance of a human body into dust and vapor, any more than I would at the cutting of an electric wire as a sign that the electricity coursing over it has suffered the least change except in direction. My body is to me as my house or my tool chest, a mere

material convenience for me, and is not my very self, as I very well know when I see my friends with limbs sawed off becoming more resourceful often in mind and heart.

I think I make it evident in this way that the burden of proof is upon the Agnostic to show how life — that is, personality — is dissolved and dies. His most radical answer, however, to this has been that he does not know anything about it. How could any reasonable Christian ever have resented such an answer as that? If the Christian were partial to immortality, was it not just the answer he wanted? It greatly strengthens the supposition of life's continuing. It shows how very hard it is to suppose otherwise.

Furthermore, there are at least four great sureties of life after death. There is, observe, not a scrap of argument in court against it. Doubt is merely neutral, waiting to incline either way with the least breath of reasonable evidence.

1. *The Scientific Surety.* Among the common facts of science none are more absolutely demonstrated than these: matter is indestructible; not an atom, or, indeed, a quality of an atom of matter, is even changeable; force is continuous. In other words, destructibility, annihilation, and like terms, science has absolutely no use for. They are the coinage of an older day of myth. Shall, then, love, the highest conceivable quality in the universe, suffer loss or change? Science says there is one law, one element, in lowest and highest. And can we conceive of love without lover and loved? I have just said that all these negations are inconceivable to science.

2. *Surety of the Cloud of Witnesses.* In the early ages of the world, men did not seek two answers to a question. They were satisfied with one. And they always took the first. Picture to yourself an earth without electric wires or sea-going ships or any means of rapid transit, and little communication with people three hundred miles from home. In

Egypt the human soul asked of the Over-soul, "If a man die, shall he live again?" And the first and only answer was: "He shall live again. 'There is no death. What seems so is transition.'" So they frescoed and richly furnished the tombs and made eternal mummies of the dead. On the shores of Greenland, too, the soul asked the question of the spirit in which it began to have its being. And the only answer that ever came was: "He shall live again. He shall go down to eternity along the shining way of the glacier with thunder sublimity and the splendor of northern lights." In the forests of the Amazon and the Orinoco again came the one unquestioned answer: "He shall live again. He shall return to his fathers down the grape-vine forest-path of the world." It was the whisper of the world life in the ear of simplest men universally, "If a man die, he shall live again."

3. *The Surety of Evolution.* Now modern man has asked the question passionately, and answered it anew, with matured logic, in the affirmative. One of the mightiest sureties is that of evolution. It is summed up in the saying, "God has had me in mind forever." All things from the earliest ages, countless millions of years ago, were leading up to me. What, through geological evolution and astronomy, I know of the history of the universe, expels absolutely every frivolous shred in my thought of God. The brain that knows and expects, with the heart that loves, costs the pain and energy of the ages and cycles of all that I know of eternity. I can see much more than has become manifest in the plan of my life. I am not a finished being. The consciousness of eternal ages of progress is in me, through and through. He will not sport with me for His present show-play, and leave me now. I would not be so fickle with any child. And

"I know that is not good in Him
That evil is in me."

While, if the Life of Ages is not good, then is life a vast delirium, and the instincts of law and order amongst men unaccountable.

4. *The Great Verification.* But the crowning argument is the testimony of the greatest human discoverer. He who discovered the Law of laws, salvation by helping others to the extent of all your being, was also said to have brought immortality to light. He reached the fullest human consciousness, the most sensitive touch and correspondence with the life of the world, the great Over-soul and things unseen. His eyes were widest open, his vision most delicate and extensive. He saw life and beyond as from a hill. And he said: "If it were not so, I would have told you.' I see beyond the hill of death, valley upon valley in the shadows of death; and I fear no evil, for the Father abides in all of them. And on the sunny sides and in the shadows are many mansions. *Here* I abide in my Father's house from the beginning. I am its door. And *there*, also, I go ever before you to prepare a place for you. 'I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.'"

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KEEP THE BIBLE.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

Perhaps you have been brought up to believe that the whole Bible was directly inspired by the Almighty, that everything within those lids is the word of God. At last you discover that the Bible history of the creation contains manifest errors; that the geology of the Bible does not correspond with the discoveries of science; that many actions attributed to the patriarchs are inconsistent with sound morality; that there are impossible miracles asserted and irrational doctrines taught in this great collection of Hebrew literature. You therefore cease to accept the whole Bible as divine. That is your duty: you cannot help it. But, if you stop with that negation, you have merely lost a part of your old faith. One of the props of your life is gone. Do not stop there. This mere negation has not set you free. The letter of the Bible has ceased to be inspired: learn to see more of inspiration in its spirit. Read it again, to learn why this book, containing such errors, has yet been the food of the soul to countless generations, has roused the noblest sentiments of man, has been a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, has been the liturgy of nations, the fountain of glad hymns in the hour of joy, of prayers in sorrow; has brought comfort to sad hearts, the sense

of a divine presence and a blessed immortality to be-reavement. When you cast aside the false inspiration of the letter, find the real inspiration behind the letter. And let the sight of those inspired souls, Isaiah and Moses, Samuel and Paul,—leaders of men,—help you to see divine inspiration outside of the Bible also in other great manly and womanly hearts. When you see how God spoke to those sublime souls, learn to believe that he also speaks to us to-day. Believe that the exulting and abounding river of life which pours through the pages of the Bible is still rolling on to-day. Seeing how Moses and Elijah were inspired to rebuke kings and lead nations, let us be sure that it was by the same divine power that Abraham Lincoln was raised up to guide our own nation through its Red Sea to the Promised Land; that Washington was as truly sent as Joshua; that Milton and Channing drank from the same fountain of inspiration with the apostle Paul. Then we shall really believe that every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Light. Then we shall be set free from the bondage of the letter, and be able to open our souls to the coming of the everlasting Spirit, which moves where it will, creating light and life in the midst of darkness and the shadow of death.

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ELEVENTH SERIES, NO. 91.

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES

BY

REV. H. M. SIMMONS.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES.

The name "Unitarian" is supposed to have arisen to designate the believers in the divine unity rather than the trinity. That meaning still remains, but has also unfolded into a far larger one. The doctrine of the divine unity now looks immeasurably beyond the trinity to the infinity of the divine manifestations, and means the oneness, through all places and times and diversities, of that power called God.

This unity is proclaimed not only by theology, but through all modern thought. History, science, evolution,—all read it in the universal kinship of life and regularity of law. Each of the sciences reports, as the deepest truth it has found, Unity; all combine to chant as the largest truth Unity. And religion hears this as another Psalm, proclaiming more sublimely the Unity of that God of whom the Hebrew seer sang in Palestine and uttermost parts of the sea, in morning light and midnight darkness, in heaven and hell, and whom the apostle saw "above all and through all and in all." So abiding and infinite meaning is in that divine unity from which Unitarians are so fortunate as to be named.

But this truth involves the practical lesson of religious unity. For, if God is thus one and everywhere, then his presence has hallowed not only Judea, but all lands; not only the Hebrew, but all nations; not only the Christian, but all religions. Hence, instead of a single holy city and temple, Unitarianism sees every city holy where just men dwell, every spot a temple where they meet for wor-

ship or work, all honest life a liturgy, all love a sacrament. Instead of a few inspired writers, it sees all good literature and speech inspired, and the divine revelation ever continued through human reason and conscience. Instead of one sacred Scripture, it sees an infinite and endless Bible, reaching from its Old Testament in nature to its New Testament in man, from its "Genesis" in matter to its "Revelation" in mind,—a Bible wherein all truth is "the law," all human hopes are "the prophets," all good aspirations are "the Psalms," and all love a "gospel" telling of eternal life.

Hence Unitarianism has been tolerant. It has taught that the great essential in religion is uprightness of life and integrity of character, and that men should not be judged by their theological beliefs or ritual observances, but allowed full liberty to keep or change these as their own thought and conscience may direct. It has never imposed anything like a creed; and one of its great teachers said, "Unitarianism is not so much a body of opinions as the principle of liberty of opinion." It cares little for itself as a denomination; and one of its great preachers, Dr. Putnam, said, "I have hardly ever spoken so much as the word 'Unitarian,' or sought to enlist anything like sectarian sympathies," for "there is but one religion, that is goodness," and it should work for the "universal unity and brotherhood." So Dr. Martineau said that in religion all fences should be down. But of course this work for "universal unity" requires united effort and denominational organization.

Unitarians have not lost Christ by denying the trinity. They certainly have not lost him as a moral teacher. Has, indeed, the Trinitarian faith kept him as such? Peoples who have held that faith for centuries still treat his beatitudes of meekness and forgiveness as mere follies. Nations, believing it was a very God who ordered them to love their enemies, and offer the cheek when smitten, still fight like fiends, and

respond to his "Blessed are the peace-makers" with bombs and battleships.

Nor have Unitarians lost Christ as a divine incarnation. They still see him as a "son of God," and only add his own saying that every peace-maker is another, and the apostle's that "every one that loveth is begotten of God." They still believe that God dwelt in Jesus, and only add the apostle's words that, "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us," too, and that whosoever "dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Unitarians are often charged with denying the divinity of Christ. They do not deny, but declare it. They declare the divinity of his lessons of love, the divinity of the soul that felt them, the divinity of the man who lived them. But by the same principle they declare the divinity of that love everywhere, the divinity of all souls that feel it and of all the men who live it. This is their theology,—that God is love, and lived in the loving Jesus, and lives in all love, and is worshipped best by our love of each other.

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THE LAW OF CHRIST.

BY REV. E. P. PRESSEY.

Christianity is a discovery.

It was not brought into the world or made or whispered over a private wire from heaven. It is not an encyclopædia of virtues or a mystical institution of grace and worship.

It is a discovery of something as old as man, as natural as human nature. It is the principle that underlay all the ancient religions, underlies all "isms." It was there on creation morning, as gravitation was there. "Before Abraham was," said Jesus, "I am." The principle he applied to life was in operation always. Gravitation was in operation always. What happened after Newton's discovery was new enthusiasm of machine-building. Men built machines more intelligently by the same law they had hitherto struggled with blindly. So men may build better characters without the present blind anxiety and uncertainty when they understand "the law of Christ" as well as they understand "Newton's law."

In one great phrase the discovery of Jesus may be expressed,—the Brotherhood of Man and the consequent Fatherhood of God. This phrase may mean little or much to us now. Let us illustrate the nearest thing, the brotherhood of man; and afterward, perhaps, we shall understand the deeper and dearer thought of God. The instinct of brotherhood is in the natural family life. The feeble sister,

the crippled brother, the deficient or disabled, the immature or the handicapped members of the family are borne along by each and all. There is equality in every family, or there is jealousy, distrust, and concentrated hell on earth. The law of Christ is that the family sentiments are the universal morals. They make life tolerable outside the family exactly as they do within.

Ever since there were men, between all peoples and individuals absolute brotherhood has existed, and its law operated. You cannot even get selfish advantage of an offensive foreigner or inferior nation any more than you can profit by cheating a member of your own family. In either case you grieve the Holy Spirit of love, and it is unprofitable for you. You cannot enjoy a red-cheeked apple alone before the grieved eyes of a little sister or gather any noble comfort from adult prosperity you do not perpetually share. Social chills and fevers forever plague the man who obstructs the fountain of his heart's generosity, while the brotherly heart is a well of water springing up unto life eternal. How absolutely clear is the discovery of the "law of Christ"!

But how does it work, when tried? First, it produced in its discoverer a man entirely devoted to "doing good," a personality so magnetic, so spiritual, so powerful, so influential, that he has filled the centuries and the world as the greatest fact of all. With absolute scientific precision, and without controversy, we can say this of him. It led Peter to the vision that the Gentile servant of God was acceptable to Him. It sent Saint Paul and the other apostles upon unexampled journeys over land and sea to tell the nations that the earth contained but one people, who had their being momentarily in one God and Father of all, whom they all ignorantly had hitherto worshipped. It in time brought the ends of the earth together, till the earth has become one great whispering gallery, where we hear each other's voices

round the world, and where the children enter knowledge, friendship, and life together. It gives one school, one brotherhood, one international banner,—the red cross,—that stands for neutrality in quarrels of the self-desire of nations, but for sacrifice for the world desire of brotherhood. “For greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for a friend.” Here, indeed, is one God,—the life of all; one flag,—the cross of Jesus; one country,—the world. My Father, my cross, my country,—I will live with these as my mother taught me amongst seven.

Christianity, in modern scientific terms, is altruism,—the life for others. The passion for filling the world with ourselves, our deeds, our interest in it, our public spirit, rather than filling ourselves with the applause, the satisfactions, and riches of the world, is Christianity. That passion Jesus fulfilled. He could say, “The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests; but I have not where to lay my head.” So intently had he been set on filling the world with himself, his heart, and his work, that little of the world had stuck about him. Yet he declared: “All power in heaven and earth is given unto me.” “And whatsoever the Father hath is mine.” “And whatsoever I will I do.” Booker Washington, the leader of the American negro, is a marvellous illustration. Read the chapter of his autobiography entitled “Helping Others.” Those words of the title are his secret of “Up from Slavery.” When his heart first sobbed the words, “My People!” eternal life came into him. The thought of helping others “for their sakes” sanctified him, so that his native passions left him pure. He became a personality, a power, an influence for the redemption of a race. And so will this thought deal with any man. Old John Knox had the discovery of Jesus when he prayed, “O God! give me Scotland, or I die.” God gave him Scotland, and he lives to-day.

"Follow me, whether your reason approves or disapproves." The leadership of Jesus over the world is perfectly natural and rational: it falls within the range of our own experience, and is capable of being grasped by the understanding. It is the same in kind as the authority of the teacher over the pupil or of the strong nature over the weak.

The secret of this authority must be sought within the mind itself. In its last analysis, Jesus leads me not by what is in him so much as by what is in me. Every man who accepts Jesus or admires him and loves him does so because there is that in Jesus which appeals to the deepest in the man. The teacher is the boy's guide, because he stimulates his intellect to grasp new truth. Strictly speaking, it is not instruction which the teacher gives: it is only provocation; and the truths of mathematics or of science are real, not because the teacher affirms them and the text-book declares them,—they are true for the pupil only when he apprehends them for himself.

When I read the words "Follow me," why do I obey them? Not because I believe that Jesus came down from heaven to utter them, splendid as such a thought may be; not because I fear punishment, if I refuse; not because I am incapable of resistance. I accept Jesus as my guide just because, and only because, what he says meets a response from my own soul, which demonstrates its truth. The sign and seal of the truth is not the rule of the text-book nor the explanations of the teacher: it is the pupil's eager "Yes, yes! I see!" that shows that the truth has gone home. The sign and seal that Jesus is a true teacher and leader of men in the field of righteousness is not in the Sermon on the Mount, nor in the parables, nor in anything that he said or did: it is found in the fervent "Amen!" that goes up from men's hearts as they read his words and contemplate his acts. Not because we are blind, while he can see, not be-

cause we have no knowledge of eternal life, not by a mere unreasoning obedience do we follow him. He does not limit nor destroy our personality. Just the contrary is true. He reveals our own strength. He does not rob us of a single attribute. He does not take away our stony hearts and give us hearts of flesh. He does not tell us to sweep out our souls till we are perfectly empty, and then come and fill us with himself. Jesus stands before us a great, inviting, and illuminating personality,—a pure, sweet, true, good man. His example shines upon us till we grow warm, till we respond and yearn to become like him, just as a writing in invisible ink emerges to view and becomes legible when brought under the rays of a lamp. He does not import something new into us: rather he helps us to find in ourselves the springs of eternal life. We are aware that the virtue so attractive in him is somehow dormant in ourselves: we feel it stirring with a fresh power. “Noble provocations go out from him, inviting me to resist evil, to subdue the world, and to Be”; “and thus,” says Emerson, “Jesus serves us by his holy thoughts, and thus only.”

This is the eternal and natural leadership of Jesus. In every man there is something akin to what was in Jesus. When he speaks, character in him solicits character in me. It is the Christ spirit in men answering to the Christ spirit in Jesus which gives him his hold upon the ages.

I have compared the authority of Jesus to that of the teacher; but there is one marked difference. The teacher leads the boy, because he knows more. He leads in the realm of knowledge. Jesus leads me, not because I think he knows more, but because he is a better man. He leads in the realm of character. The two realms of knowledge and character are in juxtaposition, but are not identical. By confusing the two, men have supposed that, if Jesus is to be followed in the field of character, he must also be followed in

the field of knowledge. If he is my teacher in righteousness, he must also, and without limitation, be my teacher in science. So men have distorted his words to make them agree with advancing science. They felt constrained to think that Jesus knew all the facts of geology and astronomy. All the discoveries and inventions of the nineteenth century.—Jesus knew and foresaw them, only he did not choose to mention them. But one may lead in righteousness, in morals and spiritual truth, who does not claim authority in science. A boy of twenty, at home from college, knows more history and trigonometry than his mother. Nevertheless, she is his guide in life.

When Sir Charles Napier was campaigning in India, a young officer lay slightly wounded on his cot. An important movement was on foot. The troops marched past, while the officer watched them restlessly. Then the general came in sight, his gray locks streaming in the wind as he hurried to the front. Leaping from his couch, the officer began to dress. To those who remonstrated, he said, "How can I lie idle, when I see that old man, so full of years and glorious service, so active!" Displayed in the general's face, the soldier saw what he should be; and he leaped to obey.

Such is the leadership of Jesus,—not that of coercion and fear, not of eloquence, not of the supernal, but of moral pre-eminence. In him men behold what they would wish to be; and all—the orthodox and the heretic, the learned and the ignorant—are drawn after this Guide in the "way of the Blessed Life."

"Yes, thou art still the Life, thou art the Way
The holiest knew,—Light, Life, and Way of heaven;
And they who dearest hope and deepest pray
Toil by the light, life, way, which thou hast given."

Longer tracts on many subjects may be had free by addressing the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

The Belief of Count Léon Tolstoï.

(Abstracts from his Reply to the Holy Synod. The entire reply can be found in the *Christian Register* of July 18, 1901.)

I believe in the life eternal; and I believe that man is rewarded according to his acts, here and everywhere, now and forever. I believe that so firmly that at my age, seeing myself upon the edge of the grave, I must often make an effort not to pray for the death of my body; that is to say, for my birth into a new life. I am convinced, too, that every good action increases the happiness of my eternal life just as every bad action diminishes it.

I believe in God, who is for me spirit, love, the principle of all things. I believe that he is in me as I am in him. I believe that the will of God has never been more clearly, more freely expressed than in the doctrine of the man Jesus. But one cannot consider Jesus as God, and address prayers to him, without committing, in my opinion, the greatest sacrilege. I believe that the true happiness of man consists in fulfilling the will of God. I believe that the will of God is that every man should love his fellow-men, and should act toward others as he desires that they should act toward him, which sums up, according to the gospel, all the law and the

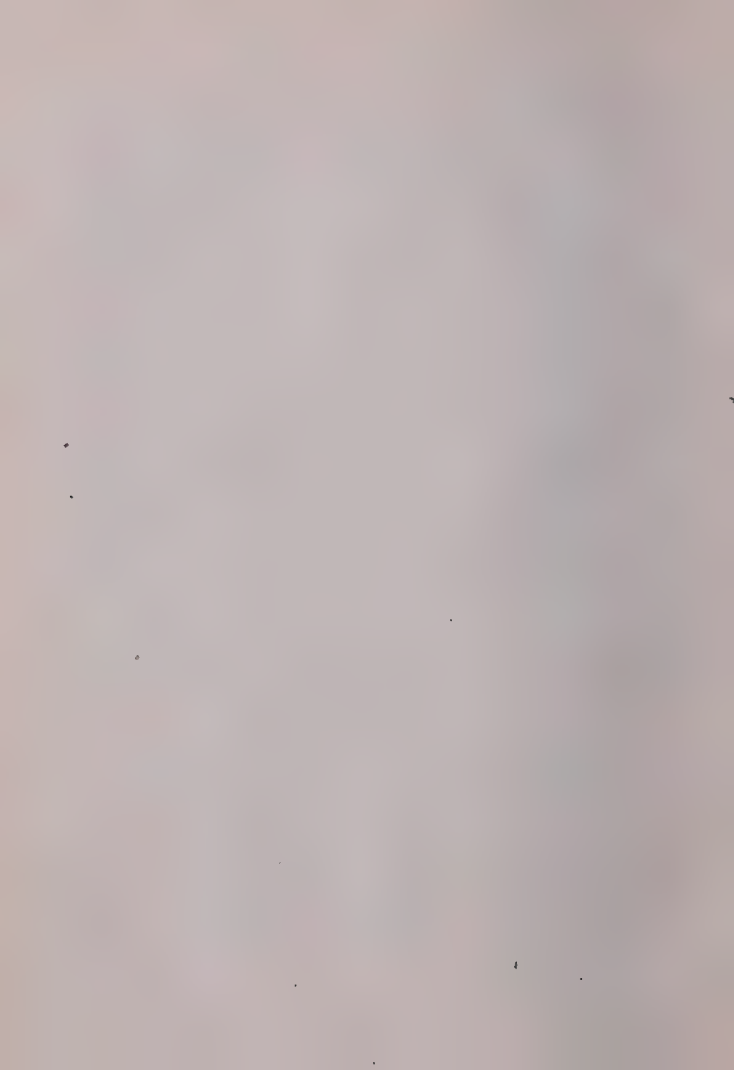
prophets. I believe that the reason of life is for each of us simply to grow in love. I believe that this development of our power of loving brings us in this life a happiness which will increase every day, and in the other world a happiness as much more perfect as we shall have learned to love more. I believe above all that this growth in love will contribute more than any other force to establish the kingdom of God on the earth; that is to say, in replacing a social life in which division, falsehood, and violence are all-powerful by a new order in which humanity, truth, and brotherhood will reign. I believe that we have only one means for progression in love, and that is prayer. Not public prayer in the churches, which Christ has expressly reprovèd (Matt. vi. 5-13), but the prayer of which he himself has given us an example,—the solitary prayer which consists in re-establishing and strengthening in ourselves a consciousness of the meaning of our life and the feeling that we depend only upon the will of God.

It may be that my beliefs offend, trouble, or scandalize some, it may be that they disturb or displease; but it is not in my power to change them, any more than it is possible for me to change my body. I must live, I must die,—and before long,—yet all that concerns only myself; but, in the hour when I prepare to return to that God from whom I came, I cannot believe otherwise than I believe now. I do not say that my faith is the only one, incontestably true for all time; but I see no other more simple, more clear, or which answers better to the needs of my intelligence and of

my heart. If another should suddenly be revealed, better able to satisfy me, I should adopt it immediately ; for nothing matters to God except the truth. As for returning to doctrines from which I have emancipated myself at the cost of so much suffering, I cannot do it. The bird that has taken flight will return no more into the shell of the egg out of which it came.

“ He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself (his peace of mind) better than all.” I have traversed inversely these phases of which Coleridge speaks. I began by loving the Orthodox Church more than my own peace. Then I loved Christianity more than the Orthodox Church. Now I love truth more than all the world ; but up to this time the truth is blended for me with Christianity as I understand it. I confess Christianity then ; and it is by the efforts that I make to conform my acts to my belief that I ought to live in peace and joy, and be able also in peace and joy to take my way toward death.

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An Outline of Unitarian Thought.

By GEORGE CROSWELL CRESSEY, PH.D., D.D.

The Unitarian Church holds to the absolute unity of God: it believes in the general tendency of human nature toward that which is good; it sees the only test of character, not in acceptance of creed, but in spirit and life; and therefore it recognizes unity of spirit and purpose as the only just and effectual basis of religious fellowship.

The logically fundamental doctrine of the so-called orthodox theology is its conception of the natural or total depravity of human nature, with which all its other dogmas correspond. The most distinctive feature of Unitarian belief is found likewise in its idea of human nature. We believe not in the depravity of man, but in his imperfection, his liability to error and sin; we believe in his ability to work out his own salvation in confidence and trust, through the moral and spiritual agencies, within and without, which God has provided; and, therefore, we believe in the natural development and progress of the race,—development and progress which are none the less spiritual because they are natural.

The Unitarian thought of God, recognizing the limitation of all human conception and language, may be best expressed in the words of the New Testament: "God is Spirit," the Indwelling Presence, the Infinite Reality in whom all things are, the Father through whose law and love creation moves to its appointed spiritual end. To this greatest of all conceptions, God, however, we attach no dogmatic significance, feeling that each one is entitled to his own thought of the Supreme Power.

Infinite Spirit, God, we believe is incarnate in humanity, not in one only of the race, but in all; all men are thus in a real sense divine. This divinity is apparent in man's intellectual, moral, and spiritual possibilities. We recognize the isolated types of transcendent genius which have appeared in history, yet we invoke no miracle to explain them. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof; but we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So are all things born of the Spirit." Thus we recognize the highest spiritual genius and attainment in Jesus, seeing therein the result also of this higher law of the Spirit working in and through all humanity.

He is thus a providential type of human character, our elder brother, our example and teacher, whose moral and spiritual precepts have been confirmed by the experience of an enlightened world, he whom from his exalted character the ages have rightly called "The Son of God."

We believe thus not in his deity, but in his divinity,—divinity not supernatural, but natural, the product of God's life in humanity.

Many Unitarians believe also that after his death he made known in some way to his disciples his continued existence, presence, and inspiration.

Error and sin are recognized in the world as an indication of the imperfection of man; also the universal principle of moral atonement, by which men united in the bonds of the race and bearing one another's burdens suffer for the mistakes and iniquity of others, creating ever an influence for righteousness. Jesus, by his supreme sacrifice in the interests of pure religion and humanity, atoned thus in the greatest degree of all for the sin and error of others, affording an example and way through which we may seek to be like even unto him.

Unitarians believe in the Bible as the book of books for religious instruction, not as infallible or containing all the inspiration of man nor as a final revelation, but as a record of religious progress and of the thoughts of many of the most deeply religious of all time, as a history of the life and teachings of Jesus. There is an element in the Scriptures which, from the absence of early written records, from the credulity of the day, and from the

zeal of the Church Fathers, more pronounced for doctrine than for historical accuracy, cannot be necessarily accepted; but far greater than this is the moral and spiritual truth proved to be such by reason and experience upon which in reality all convictions rest.

The idea of the supernatural in the sense of miraculous interposition of a higher power is the remnant of the thought of an age when natural law was unknown, and everything unusual was supposed to be the work of agencies good or evil outside of humanity. It has no place in our modern knowledge. The terms "natural" and "supernatural" represent no distinct forces, but different aspects of creation and the world-process. As we view the flowing stream, all things seem natural: as we reflect upon the Infinite Source, all things seem supernatural. The miracle as marvel is everywhere: of the miracle as magic we find no trace in the things of God. In this essential oneness of the natural and supernatural, in the rejection of the miraculous in the old sense, moreover, everything loses not, but gains in grandeur. The marvels of creation, the spiritual possibilities of man, the personality of Jesus, all seem more sublime as the result not of special acts of God, but of his universal and eternal action through law and in love.

Unitarians believe in immortality as a reasonable inference from all our knowledge, mental, moral, and spiritual, as an inherent quality of a self-conscious soul, as a seal of truth which the Almighty has placed upon the aspirations and possibilities of his creatures, for all of which, so far as our knowledge extends, he has provided a means of satisfaction, a belief, too, without which the process of evolution and the travail of the ages, ending, as they must, at last in the destruction of all physical life, seem meaningless.

The liberal faith sees in happiness and misery the results of righteousness and iniquity, the natural judgment and recompense which attend these states of being in the inner life, whether here or hereafter. It holds that character, and character alone, *is* salvation; and, whether such character be attained through the influence of Jesus or in some other of the many ways by which

men in all ages have "grown in grace" and knowledge of the truth, it sees therein a divine pathway to life eternal.

Unitarians believe in prayer, not as a special petition for temporal blessings, but as a natural aspiration of the soul and communion with the Infinite Presence, as a spiritual law through conformance to which we are uplifted and strengthened.

In the church also we believe, not as a company of select saints nor as a place solely for the intellectually or spiritually regenerate, but as an institution for the growth and establishment of character and union and fellowship in the highest things.

Denominationally, we are Congregationalists,* believing, in accordance with the sentiment of the covenants of the earliest Pilgrim and Puritan churches in New England (all of which are to-day in the Unitarian fellowship), that Congregationalism involves not only independence of individual action, but also freedom of individual thought.

Finally, Unitarians, while generally accepting the foregoing beliefs in substance, though often with modifications and additions of the individual mind and especially with different methods of expression, establish no test of belief, but welcome to their fellowship all who seek to love God with all the heart and one's neighbor as himself, all who seek to promote truth, righteousness, and love in the world.

Longer tracts on many subjects may be had free by addressing the American Unitarian Association, Boston, Mass.

* After the separation of the Congregational body into "liberal" and "orthodox" wings, about 1820, the divisions were known as Congregational Trinitarian and Congregational Unitarian. In time these designations were generally abbreviated into the common "Congregational" and "Unitarian" of to-day.

THE TRUE SELF IS THE BEST SELF.

BY REV. J. F. CLARKE, D.D.

ALL souls belong to God and to goodness by creation. God has evidently created every soul for goodness. He has carefully endowed it with indestructible faculties looking that way. Every soul has an indestructible idea of right and wrong, producing the feeling of obligation on the one hand, of penitence or remorse on the other. Every soul has the tendency to worship, to look up to some spiritual power higher than itself. Every soul is endowed with the gift of freedom, made capable of choosing between life and death, good and evil. Every soul is endowed with reason, with a capacity for knowledge; and especially is every soul endowed with the faculty of improvement, of progress.

THE true self in man is not bad, but good. Man goes away from himself whenever he does wrong. Hidden in the words we use are whole volumes of history and philosophy. When our words and phrases do not come from theories, but from the long observation of the race, they often contain the results of that experience in compact form. Thus "to come to one's self" means to recover mental and moral sanity.

Let us understand, then, that our true self, our real

self, is our best self. In our best hours we are most truly ourselves. We are then what God made and meant us to be. We are at one with ourselves. All our faculties work harmoniously, according to the true method. The soul commands: the body obeys. The conscience obeys the law of right: the appetites and desires are obedient to that conscience. There is no such thing, therefore, as natural depravity. All depravity is unnatural.

IF we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. If we say we are totally depraved, we also deceive ourselves. God has put into us a great deal that is good. He has given us reason, conscience, heart, freedom, to choose good, power to resist evil. When he has done all this for us, to say that he has made us totally depraved is not humility, but ingratitude and impiety.

THE sense of right and wrong, the delicacy of conscience, the feeling of moral obligation which is in us, we did not make ourselves. God gives it to us: he gives it anew all the time. It is his Holy Spirit dwelling in us, warning, advising, restraining, impelling us. It is in every human soul. This holy monitor, this sacred, solemn voice, is from grace, from love. It is the Father's arm held round every child to keep him safe from evil.

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MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.]

[No. 1.

WHAT DO
UNITARIANS BELIEVE?

BY

REV. SAMUEL J. MAY

BOSTON:
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

OUR FAITH.

The Fatherhood of God.

The Brotherhood of Man.

The Leadership of Jesus.

Salvation by Character.

*The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.*

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

WHAT DO UNITARIANS BELIEVE?

BY REV. SAMUEL J. MAY.

[The following is reprinted, at the request of many of our brethren from a tract which has been much circulated. Of course, it is only an individual statement, and is not intended as a creed.]

BECAUSE we have no formula of faith; no system of doctrines; no list of articles prescribed by pope, bishops, General Assembly, or other human authority, which every one must profess to believe before he can be admitted to membership in our church, — there are those who allege that we Unitarians have no faith; that we believe nothing, or that each one believes what he pleases.

Other churches, it is urged, deal better by their members, — instructing them as to what they must believe, nay, furnishing to all who wish them printed copies of the system of doctrines which those churches severally uphold and contend for as the “faith once delivered to the saints,” which every one must accept in order to salvation. Nay, you may go to the book-stores, and buy the volumes in which are printed the creeds of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, or Baptist sects, — creeds devised and written out (some of them centuries ago) by men accounted wise enough to determine what others, as well as themselves, ought to believe, and thereby secure to the churches, for whose edification they were especially concerned, a unity of faith.

But, if any one supposes that this end has been attained in either of the above-named churches, he is much mistaken. Of course, what the creed is, that either church prescribes, may be found, as I have said, in this or that printed volume. But

what Episcopalians or Presbyterians or Methodists or Baptists individually believe, you can ascertain only by inquiring of them individually. And you will discover, — if you can get the members of either of these churches to define to you their real beliefs, — you will discover as many and great discrepancies between them as between the members of the Unitarian Church. It was publicly declared, not long ago, by an Orthodox minister of Syracuse, in the presence of hundreds who belonged to the Orthodox churches here, including several of their ministers, — it was publicly declared, that “no Trinitarian can be found, who, if called upon to state his views, would state them precisely in the language of the creeds of either the Presbyterian or the Episcopal churches.” This declaration was publicly made in the city of Syracuse, in the presence of hundreds; and never yet, so far as I know, has it been denied. It is notorious, that certain doctrines, explicitly stated in the above-named systems of faith, are not now preached in those churches. And I have several times made the assertion, which I here repeat, that nothing would so soon empty the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and other Orthodox churches, as for the ministers to read *intelligently* to the people the several creeds, or articles of faith, of those churches, and insist upon their believing each and every article thereof, in its most obvious sense, as the condition of continued membership.

I am utterly unable to discover the benefit which ever has been or can be derived from a creed prescribed by human authority; a formula of faith; a system of doctrines devised and concocted by any man or any set of men, to be enforced upon the assent of other men, each of whom has an inalienable right to think for himself. Were there time now, and were this the occasion, I would show that many and very grave evils, gross hypocrisies and atrocious cruelties, have everywhere, and in all ages, been the legitimate offspring of this assumption of authority to dictate to fellow-men what they must believe.

But my purpose, at this time, is to inform those who wish to know, what is the faith of Unitarians. Of course, I may not speak for all who bear this name, but for those only whose opinions and belief I do know; and they are many.

First. We believe and insist, that each and every rational and moral being, male and female, is under the highest obligation to form his or her own opinions about religion. Every one, we hold, is bound and therefore should be left perfectly free to seek after, if haply he may find, the truth of God for himself; form his own creed, his own body of divinity; be fully persuaded in his own mind as to what is true on every question that may arise respecting the character of God, the principles of the divine government, man's accountability, the design of his life in this world, and his destiny in the world to come. There is no other subject of thought comparable to this in importance; therefore every one should be encouraged and urged to give all the attention to it he may be able to give. By the study of the Bible, and the works and the providence of God, each one should strive to learn all he may of the mind, the purposes, the will of the heavenly Father, that he may become an intelligent and obedient child. He should avail himself of the thoughts, the results, of the inquiries and reasonings of others, so far as he shall find them profitable. But he is under no obligation whatever to accept the conclusions at which the mightiest intellects have arrived, if they do not appear to his own mind and heart accordant with the truth and righteousness of God. He who, in deference to the authority of another, professes to believe what he does not see to be true, has hoodwinked himself; or he has entered a labyrinth in which he will not know whether he is going right or wrong. But he who reverently embraces whatever, in the best use of his understanding, seems to him true and right, shows his allegiance to God; and he will not be left to wander into the path of fatal error.

We Unitarians believe with the Apostle Paul (Rom. viii. 14), that, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." We believe that Jesus of Nazareth was led by the Spirit of God more constantly and entirely than any other son of man; that he is therefore called the dearly beloved Son of God, and is the best teacher of true religion. We believe that the doctrines he preached disclosed more fully than those of any other teacher the character of God and his purposes.

respecting man; and that the moral precepts he gave were more nearly identical with perfect righteousness, "the righteousness of God." Indeed, we believe that they only who hear and obey the commandments of Christ will be redeemed from all iniquity; and that the world will never be filled with righteousness, peace, and joy, until the children of men shall be trained up in the school of Christ, rather than that of Augustine or Calvin, — be taught to understand, and persuaded to conform to, the principles and spirit of "the dearly beloved Son of God."

All Unitarians believe that Jesus was one with God, — *in a spiritual sense*; the sense in which he prayed (John xvii. 21-23) that all who shall be brought to believe on him might become one with him and the Father. We believe he was wholly devoted to God, was led always by his Holy Spirit, and had no desire but to do his will. We all believe that Jesus was not a self-existent, but a created being, dependent upon and accountable to the one Supreme, whom he often addressed as his Father and his God.

Many Unitarians are Arians, that is, they believe that Jesus pre-existed; that he was an archangel, next in dignity to the Most High; that he appeared upon earth in the person of the son of Mary, and led the life and died the death that is narrated in the New Testament. Other Unitarians, probably the larger part of them, believe that he was a man supernaturally born of his mother only, in accordance with the accounts given by Matthew and Luke. But there are many of our denomination who believe, as I do, that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary; that the accounts prefixed to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, inconsistent with each other, are not genuine, but were taken from the thousand marvellous stories which were invented in the second and third centuries of the Christian era to magnify, in the eyes of the ignorant and credulous, the founder of the new religion, and do away the reproach of his crucifixion.

But, whatever may be our differences of belief on this point, we Unitarians all agree, that it is not the physical or metaphysical nature of Christ which most concerns us, but his

moral and religious character. We believe that he was the most excellent person who has ever lived upon earth; that he was a *perfect* man, holy, harmless, undefiled. We believe, that, in the highest degree, he was the Son of God, dearly beloved, because he was at all times, in all things, led by the spirit of the heavenly Father. We believe that he was tempted in all points like any other man, but that he never yielded to temptation. He did no sin. He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief; but he was perfected by his sufferings, and not made by them, as too many are, peevish, discontented, rebellious.

We Unitarians believe that Jesus is our great exemplar, set before us by the heavenly Father to be our pattern in all things; that in him we see "the measure of the stature of the perfect man," "the mark of our high calling;" that, "as he was holy, so are we called to be holy in all manner of conversation." It is therefore a prominent article of the Unitarian faith, that all men ought to act at all times as Jesus would act in the same circumstances. The best test we can apply to our own conduct, words, feelings, and to the conduct, words, feelings of others is this: Would "the perfect man" act, speak, feel thus? And in estimating the character of men, and the regard in which they ought to be held in the Christian Church, we Unitarians believe that we should consider, not the accuracy of their speculative opinions, "the form of sound words" to which they may give their assent, but the degree of goodness which is seen in their daily lives, the principles on which they act, and the feelings which they manifest in their intercourse with their fellow-men; moreover, the spirit which they evince towards God under the various trying circumstances of life, prosperity and adversity, joy and sorrow, health and sickness. In short, we Unitarians believe that "he only who doeth righteousness is righteous;" that he only whose character resembles Christ's is a Christian; that he only loves God who loves his fellow-men, who loves to be and to do good.

Unitarians, most if not all of us, repudiate the Orthodox doctrine of Atonement, as it is explained by many, — that men are saved by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, or in

some way transferred to their account in the final reckoning with the Judge of all. Much more earnestly and utterly do we reject it as others teach it, — that God inflicted upon him, and that Jesus endured, the *punishment* due to all sinners for their native, original depravity, and for their actual transgressions; and that, in consideration of his vicarious *punishment*, those are saved who believe in and gratefully accept this propitiation. Most Unitarians, if not all, consider this dogma as most odious, an impious stigma upon the character of our heavenly Father. Of course, we most gratefully acknowledge that Christ suffered much for the redemption of sinners; that he gave his life on the ignominious and excruciating cross, that he might fix in the hearts of men those truths, those principles, that faith, that hope, that love, which alone could raise them above the trials and temptations of earth. But we believe that men are saved only so far as they themselves accept the truths and embrace the principles which Jesus so impressively inculcated, and acquire the spirit which the beloved Son of God manifested through life, and especially on the day and in the hour of his death. We believe that men are saved, and can be saved, only so far as they become themselves righteous in the sense and spirit of Christ's righteousness.

We repudiate utterly the Orthodox doctrine, that only a small portion of the human race are elected to be saved; that these favored few were predestinated unto everlasting life before the foundation of the world; and that all the rest of mankind were fore-ordained to everlasting death, which means everlasting life in unalterable and profitless suffering. We turn from such a proposition as from the blasphemy of demoniacs. We believe that the gift of life was intended by the heavenly Father to be a blessing to every one upon whom he has conferred it; that it may be a blessing to every one, in this present state, who chooses so to make it; and that, in the future state, those who have been perverted, misguided, depraved by the evil influences of this world, may be brought to a sense of their folly and wickedness by the retributive consequences, — the shame and suffering they will endure in the future life, — and *there* may repent, turn to God, and be accepted by him.

We Unitarians believe that the consequences of transgressions are evil, only evil, and that continually, both in this world and in the world to come. Sin is the poison of life, and it is "the sting of death." Sin is the only thing to be dreaded in time and in eternity. It is the abundant source of all our misery. It obscures the light of the Sun of Righteousness, and covers the benignant face of the heavenly Father with a dense cloud which men call "the wrath of God," although we are assured he is unchangeable, ever the same tender, compassionate parent, "slow to anger," "ready to forgive," but too just, too holy, too pure to overlook any iniquity. Benignant as God is, no sinner can ever stand before him but in shame and confusion of face; and he must cease to be a sinner before he can be happy in his presence, that is, anywhere.

We believe that our all-wise, all-merciful Father in heaven can feel no more displeasure, no more anger at our sins, than the wisest and kindest parent ought to feel. He cannot be stimulated to vengeance, as the Orthodox would have us suppose, by any pride of place, or jealousy of his power. He will inflict no more suffering, no more punishment, upon any, than it is right we should endure, until we repent, and return to him in entire obedience of life and thought. Indeed, many Unitarians hardly dare to pray that any of the *consequences* of our iniquities may be averted from us, excepting upon our true repentance, because we believe that there is no more wise, no more merciful provision in the Divine Government, than that which has attached shame, suffering, punishment, to iniquity, transgression of any of God's laws, sin of every kind. It is by these consequences, by the bitter experience of some of them in this life, and the fearful looking-for of others in the life to come, that we are taught the essential, the irreconcilable, the eternal difference between right and wrong, good and evil, sin and holiness.

We Unitarians believe that there is nothing in this life or the life to come to hinder the salvation of any one, nothing in the peculiarities of the Divine Nature or the organization of the Divine Government, nothing to prevent the acceptance of any child of Adam, excepting *his own sins*; and that,

whenever these are repented of and forsaken, no earthly father ever received a returning prodigal more graciously than the heavenly Father will receive and bless the penitent sinner.

Of course, consistently with what I have declared to be our faith, we Unitarians do not believe as do our Orthodox brethren respecting the nature of man; or rather, I should say, we cannot believe what the creeds of the Presbyterian and other Orthodox sects set forth on this subject. We cannot believe, that, in consequence of their transgression, our first parents "became dead in sin," as the Presbyterian Confession of Faith declares, "and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body." Nor do we believe that "the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature was conveyed to all their posterity," whereby we all are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." We reject this as a horrible misrepresentation of God, and of the nature and condition of men.

But we do believe that the transgression of Adam and Eve, and the sins of all parents since their day, have transmitted to their offspring germs which, if not repressed, will develop into kindred sins. We believe that all the children of men are born capable of holiness and liable to sin; with senses, appetites, faculties, affections, passions, which adapt them to live in a world like this, to enjoy, innocently if they will, all the good and pleasant things which here abound, and to discharge all the duties and exercise all the virtues that here may be required of them: but, at the present time, these properties of their nature are avenues to temptations, which, if not resisted, will mislead and corrupt their souls.

We do not deny, but sorrowfully own, that a great proportion of the children of men, in all ages, have yielded more or less to their temptations; and, therefore, that sins and their sad consequences ever have and still do abound in the world. The lusts of the flesh, the pride of life, the love of money, the eager desire for power, envy, jealousy, revenge, have overspread the earth with crimes and miseries.

This sad state of things, we believe, is owing, in a great

measure, to the incompetency, or the negligence, or the evil examples of parents, or to their mistaken views of human nature and of education. We hold that the highest office which can be conferred upon human beings is the office of parents. Upon the faithful and wise fulfilment of its duties depends the welfare of mankind, more than upon that of governors, presidents, or kings, or upon that of ministers, priests, or bishops. If all fathers and mothers were what fathers and mothers ought to be, the children of men would be also children of God; communities would be like well-ordered, happy families; the only law would be the Golden Rule; and the will of God would be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

We Unitarians believe that the ignorance, sin, and misery which abound in the world are, in another great measure, owing to the influence of false religions. Pure and undefiled religion — doing justly, loving mercy, walking humbly, keeping one's self unspotted from the world — is so noiseless and unostentatious, as well as difficult, that men have ever been found too ready to believe, and priests and religious visionaries have encouraged them to believe, that something else might be substituted for the daily and hourly practice of all righteousness. Outward observances, imposing rites and ceremonies, costly sacrifices and oblations, the keeping of holy days, paying tithes, performing pilgrimages, building churches, contributing generously to the support of the priesthood or for the maintenance of those who will compass sea and land to make proselytes, — these things, and such as these, have, in all ages, in every country, and under every religious system, been substituted for personal obedience to the laws of right action, fidelity to God and to man, in all things, at all times.

Notwithstanding the exceedingly plain and emphatic declarations of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Micah, and other Hebrew prophets; notwithstanding the explicit, impressive preaching of Jesus Christ, his Sermon on the Mount, his inimitable parables, his prophetic description of the final judgment, and, more than all, his own perfect example, — the people throughout Christendom have been misled by their priests and theologians into notions respecting the way to avert the displeasure and con-

ciliate the favor of the Most High scarcely less false than those which prevail in the Mahometan and Pagan lands.

The vast majority of the people called Christian have been so perverted from the religion of the gospel, that they suppose their salvation and acceptance with God depends very much more upon their faith in the righteousness of Christ, than upon their own personal righteousness;* very much more upon their assent to the creed which some church prescribes to them, than upon their obedience to the commandments which God hath given them; very much more upon their having been the subjects of a revival, and having had a remarkable experience, than upon having always humbly and prayerfully endeavored to know and to do what the Lord requires; very much more upon their strict observance of the sabbath, their frequent attendance upon religious meetings, their fervency in prayer, and their zeal in defence of this or that form of sound doctrine, than upon their living truly and beautifully in all the relations of life, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in the world."

Now we Unitarians believe that each and all of these substitutes for true religion — the putting of Roman Catholicism or Calvinism or Episcopalianism or Presbyterianism or Baptism or Methodism in the stead of Christianity — has been, is, and ever must be, disastrous in its influence upon the characters, the spiritual welfare, and improvement of men.

We believe that only those teachers of religion who insist that personal holiness of life and heart *is the one thing needful*, — only such are teachers of the school of Christ; and that never, until people generally are brought unfeignedly to be-

* The most popular and able Orthodox preacher in our country has just now so declared, in "A Familiar Lecture," delivered to his large audience, and published in an extensively circulated journal, "The Independent," Feb. 9, 1860.

"This is our danger: not that we shall be sinful, not that we shall be imperfect, not that we shall be vain, not that we shall be foolish, not that we shall be corrupt in our imaginations, but that we shall not believe in Christ. *Our salvation is not half so much imperilled by wickedness as by unbelief.*"

lieve that this personal obedience to God in all things is indeed the one thing needful, — never will that obedience be generally sought after, and the education of children be so devised and conducted, from the beginning, as to develop the divine in them, and lead them to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”

Never, until the health and life of each man’s soul is shown and believed to depend upon his conformity of himself to his highest ideas of right, will the thought of right assume and maintain that prominence in his regard which it ought ever to have.

We believe in the cross; upon it we behold the glory of our Lord, his spirit of entire self-sacrifice. Some of us have put up, in and upon our churches, representations of the cross, as the emblem, not of that righteousness which is to be imputed to us, but of that righteousness which each one of us should endeavor to attain to; a righteousness so true, so entire, that it would prompt and strengthen us to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, — nay, even to give up life itself, rather than violate a principle of godliness; yes, sacrifice our bodies, and all that we hold dear in life, rather than deny the faith, sully the purity, or darken the hope of our souls.

We Unitarians believe in prayer. True prayer is the breathing of the soul. Without it there is no spiritual life. It is the constant aspiration of the “inner man” to be continually renewed in knowledge and holiness, “after the image of Him that created him.” But we reject much that is called prayer. Nothing is prayer but the sincere desire of the heart, “uttered or unexpressed.” Exercises of domestic, social, and public prayer are doubtless very useful, when conducted in a right spirit. But the prayer-meeting or the church-assembly is not the place to which we go to satisfy ourselves whether any men are truly religious. The mere decorum of the occasion would keep most persons there “seeming to be religious.” We would go rather to the places of men’s business and pleasure. We would observe them in their intercourse with their fellow men and women. We would know on what principles they act in trade, in politics, in places of amusement; how

they deport themselves toward their superiors and their inferiors, those they are dependent on, and those who are dependent on them. We would see them in their hours of recreation, when unwithheld, and consider how far their love of pleasure carries them. Still more must we be informed of their conduct in their domestic relations, whether they fulfil well the paramount duties there, — the conjugal, parental, filial and fraternal.

We believe that it is not what a man may profess or pretend to be that should establish his claim to the Christian name, but what he is seen and known to be in all those relations and intercourses which try and prove “what spirit he is of.”

These are some of the things that Unitarians believe. We do not, however, set them forth as *a creed*; we have not arranged them into a system of faith which every one must accept and assent to in order to his salvation. We dare not prescribe any form of words, which our fellow-men must subscribe to, or else be damned. Some dear children of God may believe more, some may believe less, than we do. “Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind.”

Without, therefore, dictating to others precisely any set of articles as essential to be believed, we only insist that they must believe that or those things which shall incite, guide, and strengthen them “to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us *from all iniquity*, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

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IS THE BIBLE INFALLIBLE?

The popular mind is full of the idea that, as regards the Bible, the alternative is, "all or none": we must either accept the volume entire, as in every part "a perfect and infallible revelation from God," or else "throw it all away."

That such an alternative seems to any to be strange or unreasonable, does not alter the fact that it is in the public mind. The great majority of the people hold it as firmly as any other article of their religious creed.

No class of persons is more severely lashed from many pulpits, and by a large part of the religious press, than those advanced biblical scholars and critics who, as the charge is, "cut the Bible to pieces."

Says Dr. Talmage: "The Bible is either all true or all false." Mr. Spurgeon declared the same. Mr. Moody went so far as to affirm that "unless every word and every syllable, from Genesis to Revelation, is true, we have no Bible, and we may as well gather together what we have been calling our Bibles and make a bonfire of them, and build a monument heaven-high to Voltaire and Paine." Prominent denominations continue to depose able, scholarly, devout, and honored men from their ministry for denying the doctrine of

were not miraculously removed from those who were chosen as the channels of divine revelation."

Says the distinguished English biblical scholar, Dr. Samuel Davidson: "Inspiration properly belongs to persons, not to books. The authors of the different works contained in the collection called the Bible — of most of whom we know little or nothing, sometimes not even the name — were men of various intelligence and endowments. Possessing unequal gifts, their productions are of unequal value. As infallibility belongs to God alone, none of them was infallible in what he said or wrote. Each wrote according to his light and the purpose he had in view. Contradictions, inconsistencies, errors both intellectual and moral, are observable in their writings."

Says Dr. R. Heber Newton, the eminent Broad Church Episcopal clergyman of New York: "Our sacred books are not superhuman but human works, natural and not supernatural in their origin; for most part by no means certainly the productions of the authors to whom they have been assigned traditionally, and very certainly of considerably later date than that thus assigned to many of them; the historical works, assuredly, as they now stand, the result of several hands and many re-editings; all of them manifesting the limitations of ordinary literature in their reasonings, their historical references, and their interpretation of earlier sacred writings."

Says Professor Briggs: "So far as I can see, there are errors in the scriptures that no one has been able to explain away. . . . If such errors destroy the authority of the Bible, it is already destroyed for historians. Men cannot shut their eyes to truth and fact. But on what authority do these theologians drive men from the Bible by this theory of inerrancy? The Bible itself nowhere makes this claim. . . . It is a ghost of modern evangelicalism to frighten children."

Now shall we accuse these eminent Christian scholars of attempting to destroy the Bible? Indeed is there any reason for believing that their love for it is any less real than that of Mr. Moody, Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Talmage, the prosecutors of Dr. Briggs, and the rest, who tell us that every word within its covers is from God, and that we must either accept it all or reject it all?

How many of us know the story of the great biblical critic, Ernest Renan, how in his young manhood he came to leave Catholicism? He was a student in the famous Roman Catholic theological seminary of St. Sulpice, in Paris. The career opening before him in the Church was a most promising one. But as he went forward with his careful studies of the Bible, he found to his surprise that it is "no more exempt," to use his own words, "than any other ancient book, from contradictions, inadvertencies, and errors." He discovered in it unmistakable evidences of fable and

legend, and other traces of purely human composition. He found proofs, not to be gainsaid, that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. The last part of the book of Isaiah he saw must be ascribed to a different hand from that which produced the first part. He came upon "irreconcilable divergencies between the synoptists (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and the Fourth Gospel, and between the synoptists compared with one another." Especially was he disturbed by the evidences which modern critics had brought to light that the book of Daniel, so called, could not have been written by Daniel, or at the time of the exile, as the Roman Catholic Church taught, but really was a composite structure, apocryphal in its character, and dating as late as the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, in the year 169 or 170 before Christ,—that is to say *after* some of the events which it was supposed to predict *had taken place*.

Well, with all this new light regarding the nature of the Bible, what could the young student at St. Sulpice do? Ought he to have thrown the book away, since he could not any longer accept it all? But that would have been as dishonest, nay as impossible, as to accept all; for large parts of it he found to be reliable. Its devotional poetry was the finest in the world; its morals and religion were of inestimable value, and were independent of the theory of Bible infallibility; and Jesus was the one character in history for

whom he felt the profoundest love and reverence. His course soon became plain. He must leave the Church where mental freedom was denied him, and take an independent position where he would be at liberty to follow the light of truth. This is the way the world came to have its Renan, the independent Bible scholar.

How many of us know the still more interesting and impressive story of Bishop Colenso, of the Church of England? Colenso was a learned, devout, and trusted clergyman of that Church, the author of books on mathematics and other subjects which brought him much fame. Having been appointed Bishop of Natal, in South Africa, he undertook among other labors the translation of the Bible into the language of the Zulus. While he was at work translating the stories of Genesis, he had the question of Bible infallibility forced upon his attention as it had never been. Previously he had taken the infallibility theory for granted. Occasionally he had felt some of its difficulties, but had put them aside. But now it was forced upon him in a way that allowed him no escape. The story is best told in his own language. He says: "While translating the story of the flood, I had a simple-minded but intelligent native,—one with the docility of a child, but with the reasoning powers of mature age,—look up and ask: 'Is all that true? Do you really believe that all this happened thus,—that all the beasts, and

birds, and creeping things upon the earth, large and small, from hot countries and cold, came thus by pairs, and entered the ark with Noah? And did Noah gather *food* for them *all*, for the beasts and birds of prey, as well as the rest?" Says the Bishop: "My heart answered in the words of the prophet, 'Shall a man speak lies in the name of the Lord?' I dared not do so. My own knowledge of some branches of science, of geology in particular, had been much increased since I left England; and I now knew for certain, on geological grounds, a fact of which I had only had misgivings before,—namely, that a universal deluge, such as the Bible manifestly speaks of, could not possibly have taken place in the way described in the book of Genesis, not to mention other difficulties which the story contains. . . . Knowing this, I felt that I dared not, as a servant of the God of truth, urge my brother man to believe, as a historical narrative, that which I did not myself believe, and which I knew to be untrue."

Now under these circumstances what ought Bishop Colenso to have done? Should he have told that earnest Zulu, who trusted him, to throw the Bible all away? And then should he have thrown it all away himself, because he could not accept the legend of a universal deluge as a historic fact? Or ought he to have exercised reason and judgment in the matter, as he would have done in other things?

As a candid and honest man, he adopted

the latter course, and as a result gave up the old theory of Bible infallibility, which he saw had no basis of truth, and adopted a view in harmony with the facts: a view which makes the inspiration of the past not a fetter upon men's souls to-day, but a liberator and a quickener; a view which teaches that the Bible is a great and precious light shining on man's path, but that God is greater than any possible Bible, and that the real foundations of religion are in God and the soul of man, and therefore cannot be overthrown by the mere discovery of the fallibility of texts, inside the Bible or out.

In the face of such experiences as these of the devout and noble-minded Bishop of Natal, how shallow seems the view that would identify the foundations of religion with a book; and especially how shallow seems that conception of a great and many-sided literature like the Bible that would apply to it the cheap and senseless rule, "all or none,"—"accept the whole or reject the whole"!

One of the most difficult of all things to account for is the fact that, with the Bible itself before men's eyes, so that they need only look to see its imperfections, the doctrine that it is an infallible book, with no imperfections, could ever have come into men's belief. How did the doctrine arise?

I suppose it is generally taken for granted that the Bible itself *claims* to be infallible. But this is a mistake. There is much in it

that negatives such a claim. The biblical writers turn us in upon ourselves, bidding us to "prove all things," casting out the evil and retaining the good. Jesus says, "Why of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Both the Old Testament and the New abound in appeals from external authorities of all kinds, to the reason, the hearts, the consciences of men. The imperfections of the various Bible characters—even some that are most distinguished and honored—are freely pointed out.

We think of David as one of the inspired writers of the Old Testament. Yet David's sins are portrayed as many and black. Plainly the prophet Nathan had no idea of David's infallibility when he confronted him with a foul murder which he had committed, and declared to him sternly, "Thou art the man."

We think of Peter as one of the inspired writers of the New Testament. But it is clear that Matthew did not regard him as infallible when he wrote the record of Peter's denying three times that he was a disciple of Jesus.

It is plain, too, that Paul did not know of any such infallibility when he wrote of Peter on one occasion, "I withstood him face to face, because he was to be blamed."

There are several passages of scripture which are often quoted as proving that the Bible claims to be infallible. But I think a moment of careful looking at each shows that they prove nothing of the kind.

(1) One is that terrible passage (terrible is not too strong a word) found at the end of the Apocalypse or Revelation, the last book in our New Testament. This is the passage: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book." About this passage several things are to be said.

First, the intelligence, heart and conscience of man cannot permanently accept any such curse as a part of a true revelation of God. The Church of England is getting ashamed of the curses of its Athanasian Creed, and its best men are trying to get them laid aside as unworthy of anything calling itself Christianity. The curses or imprecations in the Psalms the world has outgrown; we now see that they sprung from the imperfect moral development of the age which produced them, and that it was a mistake ever to have thought them the word of God. Precisely the same is true of this curse by which the writer of the book of Revelation thinks to prevent anybody from making any changes in his book.

Dean Trench pens truer Bible when he writes: —

“I say to thee, Do thou repeat
 To the first man thou mayest meet
 In lane, highway, or open street,
 That he and we and all men move
 Under a canopy of *love*,—
Blessing, not cursing, rules above.”

By the very fact that it is a *curse* this Apocalypse passage condemns itself, and compels its own rejection as the utterance not of God, but of a very imperfect man.

Further, the book of Revelation, which contains the passage, is one of the most doubtful and disputed of all the books of the Bible as to its canonicity or right to be in the Bible. Many of the Christian Fathers and of the early churches rejected it. Some councils refused to accept it. Even the Council of Laodicea (363), which is affirmed by some to have settled the canon, cast the book out. In all the Christian ages it has been a question among scholars whether it has any right in the New Testament. Luther was decidedly of the opinion that it has not, so was Zwingle. Even Calvin denounced it as unintelligible, and forbade his pastors at Geneva from all attempts at interpreting it. We see, then, how little weight ought to attach to an utterance, especially to a curse, found in this writing.

But even if we attach weight to the passage, and believe that God really will curse any who add or subtract from “the words of the prophecy of this book,” the “this book” re-

fers *not* to the *Bible*, as some seem to suppose, or even to the *New Testament*, but only to the *single book of Revelation*, or the *Apocalypse itself*. The *New Testament* did not exist at that time. Only a part of its books had been written, and those that were written had not been gathered together into one collection. To get the *New Testament* in any such form as *we* have it, the world had to wait more than a century longer.

(2) Another scripture passage often quoted to prove that the Bible claims to be infallible, is that found in Second Peter: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Of this text two things are to be said.

First, it is found in one of the most questionable of the *New Testament* books, many authorities having always regarded the Second Epistle of Peter as ungentine. Professor Hilgenfeld says: "The composition of this Epistle by the apostle Peter is out of the question. We must look [for its date] to the second half of the second century. It is not till the third century that we find the first trace of any knowledge of this Epistle; and even as late as the beginning of the fifth century the majority rejected it." So much, then, as to the right of the passage to a place in the *New Testament* at all.

But, further, even if we admit the passage to be true scripture, it does not prove the infallibility of the Bible or of the men who

speak to us through the Bible. Go into a meeting of Quakers or Friends, and you find all waiting for the moving or prompting of the Holy Ghost before they speak. Indeed, not only among the Quakers, but in all Christian churches holy men to-day claim to speak as moved by the Holy Ghost. But they do not for this reason profess to be infallible.

(3) But the passage that is oftenest quoted as proof that the Bible claims to be infallible is found in 2 Tim. iii. 16. In our common version it reads: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

The first thing to be pointed out regarding this text is the same that has had to be pointed to in the case of each of the others: It is found in one of the unauthentic and in every way most questionable books of the New Testament. The book stands in our common English Bible with the heading: "The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy"; and it begins with the words, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son." But scholars believe this to be unreliable. Professor Pfleiderer says of the Epistle: "The tradition of its Pauline origin may be traced back as far as the second century, A.D., but may nevertheless be proved by adequate historical evidence to be erroneous." He thinks the second century is the true date of the Epistle.

But this is more than a generation after Paul's death. Davidson, expressing not only his own view, but that of many other scholars, says, "We rest in the conclusion that the author was a Pauline Christian who lived in Rome in the first part of the second century." This, then, is the first thing to be borne in mind in considering the passage before us: it is at least very questionable whether it came from Paul, or any apostle, and therefore whether it has any proper claim to a place in the New Testament.

But even if we should concede it to be a genuine utterance of Paul, it does not teach the infallibility of the Bible. It has long been held by the best scholars that the passage as it stands in our common version is a mistranslation of the original Greek. And now if we turn to the Revised New Testament, we shall find that even so conservative men as the authors of this revision discard the old translation as incorrect, and give us this instead: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction," etc.,—an utterance which nobody doubts, and which cannot possibly be used as proof that the Bible is infallible. *Of course* every scripture *that is inspired of God* is profitable,—whether it be found in the New Testament or the Old, or even if it comes to us through wholly other channels than the Bible.

So much, then, for the passages which are

most often quoted as proofs that the Bible claims to be an infallible book.

The truth is, as already stated, that it claims nothing of the kind. On the contrary, various things in it go to show that some of its most important writers and teachers understood that it was not infallible.

Paul teaches over and over, and with the greatest emphasis, that the whole Old Testament sacrificial law and ceremonial system were imperfect and have been abolished. Even the "Ten Commandments" of Moses, which we should regard as sacred if any part of the Old Testament is, he calls "the ministration of death written and engraven on stones," which is superseded by the law of Christ, written "not on tables of stone, but on fleshly tables of the heart." Could Paul have written in that way if he had regarded the Old Testament as infallible?

Jesus goes nearly or quite as far as Paul in breaking in pieces the infallibility idea. In his Sermon on the Mount, referring to various teachings in the Old Testament, he declares, "It hath been said by them of old time" so and so, "but I say unto you" it is so and so,—different, even the very opposite in important respects from what the Old Testament teaches.

No, the doctrine of Bible infallibility does not come from the Bible itself. The old Testament knows nothing of it; the new Testament contradicts it. Nor is this all: the

early Christian Church knew nothing of it. In the rigid form in which it has been taught by modern Protestants, it was unknown until the time of the German Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church has never taught it; Rome locates her infallibility in her Church, not in the Bible. The theologians of the Protestant Reformation, finding themselves confronted by the declared infallibility of the Romish Church, in self-defence set up a counter infallibility in the Bible. But they had no more ground for theirs than Rome had for hers; that is to say, there was no ground for either. Indeed the *earlier* and *greater* reformers did not hold to Bible infallibility at all. Some of the strongest utterances against it that we have from any source, come from Luther.

It requires only a very slight examination of the way in which the Bible came into existence, and of the manner in which it has come down to us, to see that any claim of infallibility for it can be only words without meaning.

If the Bible were a single book, the case would be different. But it is not: it is a *collection* of *sixty-six* books,—representing different lands, different languages, different ages, some of them a thousand years apart, different degrees of civilization, different conditions of life, different stages of religious development,—and made up of legend, myth, history, biography, laws, predictions, prov-

erbs, poetry in various forms, ecclesiastical rituals, didactic teachings, indeed almost every known form of literature. It is a collection of what survives, or of the best of what survives, of the many-sided literature of the Jewish people for a thousand years,—literature which came into existence in the same *natural* ways in which literature always arises, and which bears exactly the same marks of the ages and the men and the circumstances that produced it, that literature always bears.

The authorship of the majority of these writings is unknown, as would naturally be the case. There is great uncertainty about the dates of many. Some are collections made nobody knows by whom,—as the book of Psalms, which is the Jewish hymn-book; and the book of Proverbs, which is a collection of pithy sayings current among the people. Many of the books are compilations; some are compilations of compilations, as the Pentateuch, and one or two of the Gospels. Does all this look like infallibility? *

Consider the manner in which the Canon was formed; that is, the way in which it was decided what books should be regarded as true scripture and what should not. The whole process was a most uncertain and haphazard affair.

The Jews assigned different degrees of

* For a more extended treatment of this subject, see the author's book, "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth and Character," chaps. iv. to xiv.

value and authority to the books of the Old Testament; and some which we rank highest, as the Psalms, they ranked lowest, and hardly thought of them as sacred scripture at all. The Old Testament Canon was never really closed. Some books were left out whose moral and religious value is much higher than that of some which are in. The Roman Catholic Old Testament contains fourteen more books than does the Old Testament of Protestants.

Almost equally haphazard was the formation of the New Testament Canon. Probably few if any of the New Testament books were written with any idea on the part of the writers that they would ever become Bible. They were written simply to meet certain needs. For a long time such information as was conveyed to the people about Jesus was given by persons who remembered him and the things he had said. But as the generation that heard him passed away, the need began to be felt for written memorials of him. Hence one and another wrote down what he remembered. Out of these fragmentary memoranda came our Gospels.

Paul, when he had established churches in various cities distant from each other, naturally wrote them letters for their instruction and guidance. Naturally, these letters, or the more important of them, would be preserved, and to some extent would be copied and sent to other churches for their reading. Such

was the origin and early use of Paul's Epistles.

It was natural, too, that some historic account should be written of the labors, travels and sufferings of the other chief apostles in planting the seed of the New Christianity. Such an account we have in the book of Acts.

Not less natural was it that sooner or later efforts should be made to *collect together* these precious memorials of the beloved master, and these prized records and epistles of the first apostles of the new faith, and that the collections made should be much prized. This was just what happened. But of course the collections did not all agree. And as the churches were far apart, with little communication between them, and as printing was unknown, and as great numbers of spurious gospels, and writings falsely purporting to be the work of apostles, came into existence, and as the age was uncritical, it is not strange that much uncertainty arose as to what writings were authentic, or that into the best collections some found their way that were not genuine.

The New Testament Canon, as well as the Old, was never really settled at all. It was a matter of dispute all through the history of the ancient Church. The Church Fathers differed among themselves as to what books ought to be in; and the councils that voted upon the matter came to conflicting decisions.

Thus it happens that we have in our New Testament to-day, side by side with books that are genuine and certainly from the hands of apostles, other books claiming to be apostolic, which our best scholars are practically a unit in declaring cannot have come from apostles or even from writers living in the apostolic age.*

These facts alone, as to how the books of the Bible were written and gathered together, surely are enough to show the utter baselessness of the doctrine of scripture infallibility. Yet these facts are only a few out of the long array that passes before us as soon as we open our eyes and really begin to look into the matter.

The Hebrew language at the time when the Old Testament books came into existence, and for some centuries after, was not capable of becoming the medium of an infallible revelation. That language was written in consonant outline only: its vowels are all later additions. It is easy to see that infallibility could not have been secured through such an imperfect written vehicle.

Jesus probably spoke Aramaic. Thus his words required translating into Greek before they found a place in the Gospels; and to reach us in English they must be translated again. Are we to suppose that God has miraculously guarded these translations against possible error?

* On the origin of the Old and New Testament Canons see the author's "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., chaps. xv. and xvi.

I ought to speak of the great uncertainty that attaches to the transmission of literature by the process of hand-copying. All the books of the Bible were transmitted in this way for many centuries — in the case of some of the Old Testament books, for more than fifteen centuries. Think how great was the liability for interpolations and errors of copyists to creep in. The variations in such ancient manuscripts as we possess reach the enormous number of hundreds of thousands. Most of these variations, of course, are comparatively trivial; but some of them are very important. For example, that passage in the First Epistle of John about the “three heavenly witnesses,” which has been regarded as the strongest bulwark of the doctrine of the Trinity, is not found in the oldest manuscripts, and the Revised Version omits it. In the two oldest manuscripts the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark are wanting. So, too, most of the ancient manuscripts omit in the Gospel of John all from the seventh chapter and fifty-second verse to the eighth chapter and twelfth verse.

Thus we see that the task of getting an infallible Bible is one beset with difficulties that are simply mountainous. Indeed, to get such a Bible requires not only that every book, chapter, verse and word of all this vast and varied mass of literature should have been infallibly written, but also that it should have been infallibly preserved for centuries, infal-

libly copied by all the tens of thousands of scribes who have had to do with it, infallibly gathered into a canon, infallibly translated, and infallibly handed down to our day.

And even with all this, it can practically amount to nothing unless we are given also an infallible interpreter. If a dozen of us interpret a text of scripture in a dozen different ways, as is not uncommon, what good is there in the claim that the book from which it comes is infallible? Or if the Christian world is divided into two or three hundred sects, as in fact it is, all understanding the Bible differently, what does it avail for each to hold a so-called infallible Bible in its hand?

But it is in the *errors*, *contradictions*, and *imperfect moral teachings* of the Bible, that we see most clearly of all that the theory of the infallibility of the book is utterly without foundation.

There is no use trying to evade it; the Bible contains errors of many kinds.*

It contains incredible stories, as for example those of the talking serpent, the speaking ass, and Jonah living three days in the fish.

It contains historic inaccuracies, as the statement in Luke that the governor of Syria at the time of the birth of Jesus was Cyrenius (Quirinus), when in fact it was Quintus Sentius Saturninus.

It contains contradictions, as when in connection with David's numbering of Israel we

*On the errors and contradictions found in the scriptures, see "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., chaps. xx. and xxi.

are told in one place that it was the devil and in another that it was the Lord that tempted him to do the numbering.

It contains exaggerations, as when the statement is made that Jeroboam, the king of only about one-half of little Palestine (the whole of Palestine was smaller than New Hampshire) went into a certain battle with 800,000 picked men, and of that number lost 500,000, a number twice as large as the combined armies of North and South at the battle of Gettysburg.

It contains contradictions of science, as when we are told of the sun standing still for some hours; of a universal flood; and of the creation of the world in six days.

It contains cruel, unjust and immoral teachings, as in the imprecatory Psalms (cix. and cxxxvii.); the injunction to establish slavery (Lev. xxv. 44-46); the permission to sell bad meat to strangers (Deut. xiv. 21); and the command, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

It contains morally degrading representations of God, as in Exodus (vii. 13 and xi. 10), where we are told that God hardened Pharaoh's heart that he should not let the children of Israel go, and then punished him severely for not letting them go; and in Joshua x. (28-41), where the leader of the Israelites is commanded of God to murder inoffending women and helpless babes.*

* See "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., pp. 237-246.

Now, what are we to say to all these various and overwhelming proofs that the Bible is not an infallible book? It does no good to say they do not exist. They do exist. They confront us, and we cannot escape them. Standing face to face with these evidences, can any man who cares at all for the Bible propose the alternative, "All or nothing: accept the whole volume as from God and infallible, or throw it all away"?

It is hardly possible to conceive of a proposition more absurd or more dangerous to the Bible. It makes us realize with painful force the truth of the saying that there are no such enemies of any cause or institution as its short-sighted "friends."

Is it not high time an appeal were being made, loud and long, to thoughtful and honest people everywhere, to rise above all this strange unwisdom, this folly of speech, this intemperance of claim, and begin treating the Bible with the same honesty, candor and intelligence with which they treat other books? Does our duty to the Bible require us to lie for it? or to make pretences about it which intelligent inquiry shows are not true? or to shut our eyes against facts? Are we afraid of truth? Shame on such scepticism! Let us have no fear lest the Bible cannot endure the light. If it cannot stand without being bolstered up with make-believes, it ought to fall.

But we need have no fear of its falling if

we let the honest truth appear. It has too solid worth for that. It is not an infallible book, but it is a great book. And never did its real greatness so plainly appear as since the higher criticism of our day has begun to dispel the cloud of imaginary supernaturalism and fictitious inerrancy that has so long wrapped it about, and to reveal it to us as what it really is, the richest and highest creation of the religious life of man that has come down to us out of the great past,—a book at once human and divine, as man is both human and divine; God's book, because so profoundly man's book; and because man's book, therefore reflecting on the one side man's weakness, and on the other his strength; on the one hand his ignorances, mistakes, failures, sins, and on the other hand his knowledge, growing larger with the advancing ages, his deepening insight, his rising ethical and spiritual ideals, his battles with his lower self, his longings, his heroisms, his faith now weak and fitful, now triumphing over sense and time and death, and laying hold of the very omnipotence and eternity of God.

Why should we fear to know or to speak the truth regarding such a book? Grant that in the light of the Higher Criticism we see the Bible to contain a large element of legend, as it certainly does, what of that? The same scholarship shows that it contains a still larger element of reliable and very valuable history. And the legends themselves become

of great value as soon as we confess them to be legend, and give up the foolish task of trying to make history out of them. Then why not accept both for exactly what they are? *

Grant, too, that the Bible contains mistakes, historical, statistical, scientific, and others, as we have seen. What of that? When we remember the great size of the book, or in other words the great extent and variety of the literature that makes up the book, the long time it covers, and especially the early and uncritical age of the world from which much of it comes, the real wonder is, not that it contains mistakes, but that it does not contain more.

Grant, as we are compelled to grant, that there are predictions in the Bible that have never come to pass, and some which in the nature of the case never can come to pass. Shall this blind our eyes to the fact that prediction is not the largest or most important element of the prophetic literature of the Old Testament? Wipe away all prediction that even suggests a miraculous character, and the moral and religious teachings of this literature remain practically undisturbed. The truth is, the Old Testament prophets as a class are among the most sincere and heroic reformers the world has ever seen; and, in spite of the failure of many of their predictions, much that they have written has passed

* See "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., chap. vii.

into the permanent moral and religious life of the world.*

Go still further, and grant, as we must, that there are in the Bible imperfect moral teachings,—savage war songs; brutal imprecations against foes (so different from Jesus' "Love your enemies, bless and curse not"); selfish proverbs; sceptical, pessimistic and materialistic philosophizings and maxims of life; representations of God as cruel, vindictive, jealous, deceitful, unjust,—a being almost infinitely removed in character from the righteous and loving Heavenly Father of Jesus. Must we throw away the Bible on account of these? Yes, if these represent the whole Bible, or even its prevailing teachings. But every student knows that they do not.†

If we are intelligent and honest, when we come to the imperfections of the Bible, we shall do two things.

First, we shall accept the facts, whatever they are, denying nothing and suppressing nothing that is true.

Second, we shall seek and find our explanation of these imperfections partly in the fact that the volume is not a single book, but a *vast and miscellaneous literature*, and partly in the still more significant fact that it is a record of the life and thought of a people during *a thousand years of growth, progress, evolution*, from barbarism up to high civiliza-

* See "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., chap. viii.

† Ibid., chaps. xix. and xxi.

tion; from intellectual, social and moral conditions scarcely above those of the cruel and degraded polytheistic nations around them, up to the ethics of the Golden Rule and the religion of the Lord's Prayer. Of course a literature that is the truthful outcome of such an evolution must contain views of nature that are unscientific, records of events wanting sometimes in historical accuracy, morals low as well as high, and views of God unworthy as well as worthy.

Thus we are no longer surprised or troubled by the imperfections we find in the Bible. We see that it would not be truthful if it did not contain just such imperfections.

Instead of saying that the moral and religious teachings found in such books as Joshua and Judges and Samuel are infallible truth and wisdom, and such therefore as we ought to shape our lives by to-day, we must say, No, they came from a half-civilized age and people; they represent the moral child-stage of the Hebrew race; they are conceptions which even the Jewish people themselves outgrew, passing on from them up to the higher and truer conceptions of the later prophets, of the better Psalms, and finally of Paul and Jesus. So that instead of our being bound to accept them, we are bound not to accept them; the Bible itself teaches something higher and better.*

Not very long before the death of Phillips

* On the progress or evolution of religious ideas in the Old Testament, see "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., chap. xix.

Brooks I had an opportunity to hear a sermon from that great preacher in Trinity Church, Boston, where he had so long ministered. He took for his text one of the terrible imprecations found in the Psalms, and went forward in the name of truth and of religion to tell us, without the slightest hesitation, that the Psalmist's prayer for curses and evil to fall upon his enemies was not to be regarded as from God,—it was simply the imperfect and mistaken utterance of a man who lived in a darker age than ours, whose thought of God had advanced only to that point; but the growth of the world since, and especially the influence of Christianity, have carried us forward to where we see that the old conception was crude and imperfect and must be laid aside. We must be guided by those writers of the Old Testament who show the greatest clearness of moral and spiritual vision, and especially by Jesus and his apostles in the New Testament, not by the men of less moral elevation and insight. In other words, we must discriminate. The Bible has its precious truths; but it has also its errors and imperfections. Hence we must carry to it the same open eyes and discerning judgment that we do to everything else in life.

Now why did Dr. Brooks say this? He said it because he was obliged to say it as an honest man. It was what not only his own studies, but the scholarship of the world, compelled him to say; and what ere long no man

who values his reputation for candor and intelligence will think of denying.

Our conservative friends seem often to insist on the alternative "all or none" with the purpose of compelling persons to accept the Bible in its entirety who otherwise would not. They know that few are willing to throw it all away; so then, if they can convince the people that there is no alternative but that of rejecting it all or accepting it all, of course many will be driven to accept it all. It is a sort of coercive process.

But what are its results? They are melancholy enough. It tends to make hypocrites; under this pressure, many will profess to believe all who do not and cannot.

It tends to kill thought and inquiry, and to make men narrow bigots; for the only way men who have once opened their eyes to the imperfections of the Bible can ever again accept it all as truth, is to intellectually stultify themselves.

It tends to produce utter rejecters of the Bible and religion. Many, too honest to pretend to believe what they cannot believe, take the preachers and religious teachers at their word, and say: "Very well, if it is accept all or reject all, then we reject all. Think, we will; reason, we will; if the Bible and religion require us to fetter our intellects and believe black is white, we prefer to turn our backs upon the whole thing, and go with Mr. Ingersoll." And that is largely the reason

why the followers of Mr. Ingersoll are numbered by the tens and hundreds of thousands. This foolish, this baseless, this wicked alternative, urged by short-sighted and ignorant preachers and others, drives men into unbelief and rejection of all religion. And nothing can ever bring them back but rational views of the Bible and religion, such as are urged in this paper. These can do it, are doing it.

This is the immensely important work given to the independent, fearless, truth-loving scholars, and to the liberal churches, of our age to do,—to preserve reverence for the Bible and for religion in the thousands of thinking people of the land whom the dogma of Bible infallibility, especially this dogma in its most short-sighted form of "The Bible, all or none," has pushed far off toward permanent infidelity and indifference, if not hostility, to everything religious.

No, the Bible is not all true; but neither is it all false. It cannot be all accepted, unless one is willing to shut his eyes, push aside the scholarship of the world, and trample on his own reason and intelligence. But much of it can be accepted, ought to be accepted, must be accepted, unless we are willing to violate every principle of correct literary and moral judgment, and deeply injure ourselves and mankind.

That moral and spiritual element in the Bible, which grows ever brighter and brighter in the Old Testament, and which shines with

such splendor in the New, especially in Jesus, is its own evidence. Nobody can gainsay it; nobody wants to gainsay it. It commends itself, and forever must commend itself, to the best judgment and conscience of mankind.

The simple truth is, there are two Bibles. One is the old and outgrown Bible of tradition, credulity and ignorance. The other is the new, fresh, living, imperishable Bible of inquiry, scholarship and intelligence.

The old Bible of a darker past, which fettered reason and hindered progress — the Bible of declared verbal infallibility, of miracles and marvels and supernaturalisms literally believed, of crude morals and low views of God accepted without question — is dead, and ought to be buried. The science, the criticism, the free inquiry, the growing intelligence, the rising ethical standards of our time, have slain it. It cannot be again brought to life. And it is fortunate alike for civilization and for religion that it cannot.

But in place of it a new Bible is appearing, — a new Bible which is in every way nobler than the old; which is literature, not dogma; which is as natural as Homer and as fresh as the unspoiled human heart; in which incredible stories are softened into legend; in which impossible history is transformed into myth and poetry; in which all low morals and unworthy views of God are seen to be simply the imperfect conception of an early time, — a new Bible which reveals in a way

that finds no parallel in history or literature the growing ethical sense, the rising spiritual ideals, the ever deepening God-consciousness, the marvellous, the providential, the thousand-year-long religious evolution, of an extraordinary people. This new Bible—which is the old interpreted in the light of a larger intelligence, and born into the higher life of the spirit—will never die, and can never lose its power among men.

MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.]

[No. 3.

INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE



BOSTON

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

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INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

SECT. 1. — *Question Stated*

THE question we propose to ask is this: What reason have we for believing that the books of the New Testament (consisting of five histories, twenty-one letters, and one allegorical treatise on future events) were written by men who had received a special illumination from God? What reason is there for believing, that they were *not* written, like other books, by men of genius, industry, and reflection, in the natural exercise of these powers? If thus illuminated, what was the kind of illumination, and what its extent? And, lastly, what kind of authority do these writings possess in consequence? what is their relation to human reason, to Church authority, and to universal experience, — that is, shall we justify the views of the rationalist, the churchman, or the spiritualist?

This is the main question of inspiration, stated distinctly. It divides itself into three: *First*, Is there reason to believe that these Scriptures were composed *under any peculiar inspiration*? *Second*, What is its character and amount? *Third*, What should be its influence on the formation of our religious belief?

SECT. 2. — *Importance of the Question.*

This question is important, because high views of inspiration tend to produce bibliolatry (Coleridge), or a superstitious reverence for the letter of Scripture; and low views tend to weaken our interest in these writings as sources of positive religious truth. In the formation of opinions also, it is of especial importance to decide the degree of confidence to be placed in the declarations of these Scriptures. To decide what part is human and what divine; what part of these utterances came from the indwelling spirit of truth, and what part from the human limitations of the writers; and by what rule we can distinguish between the divine truth and the human error, ignorance, and prejudice, — this is of primary importance to us in the investigation of Christian truth. This question necessarily precedes all others. In determining the amount of evidence for or against any doctrine of belief or rule of action, we must know what weight to attach to such passages of Scripture as bear upon the doctrine or duty.

SECT. 3 — *State of Opinions concerning Inspiration.*

Upon few subjects of theology are opinions so fluctuating and uncertain as upon this. On one extreme stands the doctrine of inspiration maintained by Gaussen (translated by Edward N. Kirk, D.D.), who asserts that every word contained in the Bible was communicated by inspiration, and contains infallible truth. On the other extreme is the view (represented in this country by the author of the "Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion"), that the writers of the New Testament were no otherwise inspired than good and wise men always are, and that

their writings are full of errors both of fact and principle. These two doctrines are definite and perfectly intelligible; and, adopting either, we have no difficulty in applying it. Adopt the first, and reason, conscience, observation, experience, must all yield to the letter of Scripture: adopt the second, and you may set aside as puerile, false, or wicked, **any** assertion or command of Scripture which does not **suit** your opinions, tastes, or prejudices.

But between these two doctrines there is a vast mass of floating opinion, difficult to define or fix. Some say, the "Bible is not a revelation, but the record of a revelation." Some say, "the thoughts were suggested, but not the words." Others contend for what they call an inspiration of superintendence; that is, the writers were watched, and restrained if they were going astray, — an inspiration like the warnings which Socrates received from his demon, who never told him what to do, but only checked him from doing wrong. Some say, "Parts of the Bible are inspired, others not, — Paul was not inspired to send for his cloak, nor David to curse his enemies." Others say, "There are degrees of inspiration: all parts are inspired, but some in a greater and some in a less degree." Bishop Marsh thinks a man may believe in the truth of the religion who does not believe in the inspiration of the record. Grotius says, "It was not necessary that the historical part of the Bible should be dictated by the Holy Spirit: it was only necessary that the writers should possess a good memory." Marsh thinks we should be gainers, if we considered the evangelists as not inspired at all; for then their testimony would be more valuable as witnesses: but the writers of the Epistles must have been inspired. Some Catholics have contended that the writers of some books were not inspired, but the Holy Spirit made these books Holy Scripture, *after they were*

written, by testifying (through the Church) that there is nothing false in them. Milman thinks that the inflexible love of truth of a true Christian would be a sufficient guarantee of his fidelity as a writer.

The extreme positions of those who contend for a plenary inspiration of every word, and of those who deny all peculiar inspiration, seem to be perfectly intelligible definite, and clear; but untenable. The positions of those who stand between these points is often more reasonable, but vacillating, and not precise.

The source of this difficulty is twofold: first, in the *method of inquiry* usually pursued; second, in the absence of a precise idea of inspiration in its essential nature.

We will, then, first seek a better method of inquiry; and, second, seek a clear idea of the nature of inspiration.

SECT. 4. — *Method of Inquiry.*

The true inductive method of study is, first, to collect the facts; then, to see what theories will explain them. According to this method, we should ask, —

1st, What are the facts which show that the writers of the New Testament were inspired?

2d, What are the theories of the nature and extent of inspiration, which have been adopted to explain these facts? Are they satisfactory or defective? and, if so, how?

3d, Can a better theory be found?

But the usual method of inquiry has been quite different. Usually, it has been first assumed or argued that some particular kind of inspiration is necessary, in order that our faith should have a sufficient and a firm foundation. Then, the *necessity* of inspiration being established, a *theory* of inspiration is sought which should meet and

satisfy this necessity. Lastly, facts and arguments are sought to establish this theory.

No satisfactory result can be obtained by such a method of inquiry. With what candor or caution can we examine facts, while we believe the whole of Christian faith is in peril, if a certain theory is not established? To assume the truth of a theory on *a priori* grounds, and then look for facts to sustain it, is the sure way to introduce error and falsehood into any branch of knowledge.

The method of Gaussen is still more erroneous and objectionable. He begins by stating the theory of inspiration which he means to defend; namely, that of the plenary verbal inspiration of the whole Bible. He then proceeds to examine the usual objections to this doctrine; thirdly, to refute other theories of inspiration; fourthly, to inquire for the true place and office of sacred criticism; after this, he sums up all his views in the form of a catechism; and, finally, he proceeds to prove them. These proofs occupy about fifty pages at the close of the book, the three hundred previous pages having been devoted to stating his theory, and arguing against the theories of others. Therefore, Lord Bacon's criticism on Aristotle applies exactly to Gaussen: "He had already decided, without having properly consulted experience as the basis of his decisions and axioms; and, having so decided, he drags experiment along as a captive, constrained to accommodate herself to his decisions."

But, before proceeding to test the method which offers better prospects, we will briefly examine the history of the doctrine, which will form the subject of our next section.

SECT. 5. — *History of the Doctrine.*

Before examining a doctrine, it is well to place our minds in an unprejudiced state, by surveying the history of opinions concerning it. We thus command the whole field of inquiry, and lose the narrowness which belongs to those who have only heard one view maintained. When we see how many different forms a doctrine has taken, we cease to be blindly bound to one, and we are better prepared to accept that which shall commend itself as most according to the truth.

1. The ancient religions all taught a plenary inspiration of their prophets, and most of them had their sacred books. The Hindoos believe that the Vedas were given by Brahma; and, after having been preserved by oral tradition for a time, were written down by the wise Vya-sa. The Zendavesta declares its substance to have been communicated to Zoroaster by Ormuzd. The Moham medans maintain that the Koran was communicated to Mohammed, chapter by chapter, from Allah. The Jews believed their law to have been given by Jehovah, through the mediation of angels, to Moses. The Romans regarded with a profound reverence their Sibylline books; and, when they were consulted, the pontifex bowed to them, and did them reverence. The Greeks had no sacred books; but they referred the oracles to an inspiration of the gods, which put thoughts and words together into the mind of the priests. The notion of a plenary inspiration was, therefore, a familiar one to antiquity.

2. The Jews especially believed, not only in the plenary and verbal inspiration of their Scripture, but in the divinity of every letter and mark. Many are the statements in the Talmud to this effect.* For example,

* See Gfrörer, *Jahrhundert des Heils*.

we read that "the book of Deuteronomy came and prostrated itself before God, and said, 'O Lord of the Universe! in me you have written your law. Behold now, Solomon wishes to remove Yod (from Deut. xvii. 17, 'He shall not multiply wives') from me.' Jehovah answered, 'Solomon, and a thousand like him, shall perish; but a vowel shall not perish from thee.'" Jesus refers to these notions: "Not a jot or a tittle of the law shall pass, till all be fulfilled." (The "jot" or "iota" is the Hebrew *ayin*, the smallest letter of the alphabet; and the "tittle," or *keraia*, is the apex or corner of the letter, such, for instance, as distinguishes *Daleth* from *Resh*. So the Rabbins say, "If any one should change *Daleth* into *Resh*, in Deut. vi. 4, he would shake the universe." It would be changing the word *God* into the word *idol*.)

3. In accordance with these ideas, the Jews have always had a scrupulous care in transcribing their Scriptures. Butler, in his "*Horæ Biblicæ*," says, "It has been a constant rule with them, that any copy which is considered corrupt shall not be used, but be destroyed. A book is corrupt which wants *one letter*, or has *one too many*; which is written with any thing but ink, or written on parchment made of the skin of an unclean animal, or not purposely prepared for that use, or prepared by any but an Israelite, or on skins tied together by unclean skins. No word shall be written without a line first drawn on the parchment; no word written without being first orally pronounced: before writing the name of God, the pen shall be washed; no letter be joined to another; blank parchment shall be seen round each letter. If any of these rules are not observed, the whole book is corrupt, and must be destroyed.

4. Since the Jews, at the time of Jesus, entertained such a reverence for the letter of their Scriptures, it is no won-

der that a like feeling soon attached itself also to the New Testament. The oldest Church Fathers regarded it as inspired by the Divine Logos, even in the historical parts.* But then, the ante-Nicene Fathers extended this inspiration to heathen writers also.† Tertullian believed every edifying scripture, sacred or profane, to be inspired, reading the famous passage in Timothy, "All scripture, which is profitable for doctrine, &c., is given by inspiration."‡ Among the writings to which a more special inspiration was ascribed, were included the shepherd Hermas and the Sibylline oracles. The oldest writers perceived and felt the difficulty arising from the fact, that the evangelists did not appeal to the Holy Spirit as the source of their knowledge. In the first centuries, therefore, the tendency was strong toward a Platonic view of inspiration, in which the human activity is suppressed, and the writer becomes an unconscious instrument of God. And yet, very inconsistent and fluctuating views prevailed also, some of which leaned toward the opposite extreme of rationalism.

5. The writers of the middle ages continued to think thus variously concerning inspiration down to the Reformation. Hase, Wegscheider, and other writers, quote passages from Abelard and others, in which they speak with contempt of the doctrine of a verbal inspiration. Jerome considered the New Testament full of Hebraisms and solecisms in style. Erasmus, just before the Reformation, said of the writers of the Bible, "They were only men; they were ignorant of some things, they erred in others."

* See the evidence in Strauss, "Christliche Glaubenslehre."

† See quotations in Hase, "Dogmatic," from Theoph. Clemens, Alex and Tertullian.

‡ De Cultu Femm. c. 8: "Legimus omnem scripturam ædificationi habilem divinitus inspirari."

6. Luther, a perfectly free mind, showed his independence here as in every thing else. The Scripture he loved as his own life; but he held to no extravagant theory of inspiration. His rule was simple: "To know if a book is inspired, see if it preaches Christ. That which does not, is *not* inspired, though Peter or Paul wrote it; that which does, is inspired, though written by Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate, or Herod."

Luther, it is well known, thought the later prophets copied from the earlier; thought some parts of the New Testament had a much higher value than other parts; preferred John's Gospel to those of the Synoptics; called James's Epistle "a strawy" one, having more chaff than wheat; and said of one of Paul's arguments in Galatians (iv. 25), that it was "too weak to hold." But just so Jerome had said of another argument in the same epistle (iii. 16), that it had no force, "but yet was good enough for the foolish Galatians." And both Luther and Jerome would nevertheless sometimes argue in the manner of those who hold to the strongest view of plenary inspiration.

7. But, as the Protestant divines now relinquished tradition as a source of truth, and relied wholly on the Bible, it soon became orthodox to believe in the plenary, verbal, literal, and equal inspiration of every part of the canon. The history of the progress of opinions, from this period, becomes so very interesting and important that we shall continue it in our next section.

SECT. 6. — *Later History of the Doctrine.*

We have traced the history of the doctrine to the Reformation. We shall now see, that the inspiration of the Bible, in every word and letter, became a matter of life

and death with Protestant theologians. If we are saved by faith, and if faith means the belief of propositions, then we cannot be saved unless we certainly know what these propositions are. Thus far the Roman Church and the Protestant Church agree: they agree further in asserting the necessity of an external authority, an infallible guide, that we may know what to believe. This infallible guide the Roman Catholic possesses in his Church. The Protestant denies the infallibility of the Church. To him the only infallible guide possible is the Bible. It became inevitable, therefore, for Protestants to assert the infallibility of the Bible.

Protestant theologians, therefore, after Luther, taught that the writers of the Bible were (1) moved by the Holy Spirit to write (*impulsus ad scribendum*); that (2) the topics they were to communicate were given them by the Holy Spirit (*suggestio rerum*); and (3) that the words they chose were pointed out by a like inspiration (*suggestio verborum*). All was inspired, — words and things; history, geography, morality; what they knew before, and what they did not know. The apostolic writers and their assistants were even called “God’s amanuenses,” and “notaries or secretaries of the Holy Ghost.” They said that God used them as tongues to speak with, pens to write with. God, then, is the only author of the Bible; and, if the different books correspond in style and expression to the circumstances of the writers, it is because the Holy Ghost has seen fit to choose such expressions as they themselves would have chosen, if left to themselves.

2. But it had been remarked long since, that all of the Old Testament was not written in pure Hebrew, nor all of the New Testament in pure Greek. Jerome had spoken of barbarisms and solecisms in the Bible; but, according to the new Protestant theory of verbal inspiration, this

would be accusing God of *choosing* his letters and grammatical expressions. Nothing remained but to deny that there were any such, which was accordingly done. The most subtle distinctions and daring assertions were resorted to, and it was boldly denied that any such defects of style were to be found in the Bible.

3. This was not all. What is consist of letters; and, if words are inspired, the letters must be also inspired. But criticism had shown that the Hebrew points or vowels in the Old Testament were not nearly as old as the text, but were added by the Rabbins in later times. Therefore, it was argued, as the consonant is the body, and the vowel the soul, of the word, and the soul as well as body must have come from God, the vowel-points were also inspired, and some of the later symbols (or creeds) boldly declared that they were as old as the consonants.

4. But the dangers to be encountered from criticism were just commencing. Suppose the words were given by inspiration, letters and all, how do we know we have the original words? We have not the original MSS., but only copies of copies; who is to answer for the fidelity and accuracy of the copyist? In fact, the MSS. now extant were found on examination to differ greatly; and Mill, Wetstein, and others discovered tens and hundreds of thousands of variations in words and letters. The teachers of verbal inspiration, therefore, must do one of two things,—they must either assert that some one particular text (the received text for example) was preserved from error by a constant miracle; or the theory must be given up, and the want of infallibility admitted. But they did neither one nor the other, but denied the fact of there being any various readings, or any of consequence, and looked very angrily upon the critics for maintaining the contrary.

5. But criticism, investigation, inquiry, pursue their way, and cannot be checked by bold denials or loud clamors. There are difficulties in the way of the theory of verbal inspiration which cannot be overcome. The eighteenth century was given up to analysis, criticism, and denial; and, among other things, the assertions of the theologians of the seventeenth century were examined and denied. The doctrine of verbal inspiration was gradually but very generally relinquished; but no other theory took its place, and the whole state of opinion became vague and indefinite, as we have shown in a previous section.

As an example of this uncertainty, we may refer to Michaelis, who, in his *Introduction to the New Testament* (translated by Bishop Marsh), contends that the apostles are inspired, and what they wrote inspired too. "But," says he, "what shall we do with the books *not written by the apostles*, as the Gospels of Mark and Luke?"

"I must confess I am unable to find a satisfactory proof of their inspiration; and the more I investigate the subject, and the oftener I compare their writings with those of Matthew and John, the greater are my doubts. In the third edition of this work, I delivered the arguments for and against their inspiration with a degree of uncertainty which side of the question I should prefer, though rather inclined to the affirmative. At present, though I shall deliver my sentiments with the same cautious uncertainty as before, I am strongly inclined to the negative."

So, while our salvation was made to depend on right opinions, and the holding right opinions depended on our having an infallible teacher in the Bible, the most learned theologians of the last century were quite uncertain whether two of the evangelists were inspired or not!

6. At the present time, as we have seen, a very great uncertainty prevails among Protestant theologians upon

this subject. In sermons and exhortations, the Bible is quoted in all its parts as the Word of God, but few define what they mean by this expression. Leading Orthodox theologians in Germany, as Neander and Twisten, decidedly reject the doctrine of verbal inspiration. In England and the United States, many follow Coleridge to the same conclusions.

SECT. 7. — *Proofs of a Special Inspiration.*

The question we have now reached, after our preliminary discussion, is this: "Is there any special or peculiar inspiration to be ascribed to the New-Testament writers? Do these books differ essentially from other products of human genius? What reason have we for thinking that they were more inspired than the writings of Plato, Seneca, Augustine, Zoroaster, or Confucius?"

Let us first define the term "inspiration."

1. We do not say that the writers of the New Testament were inspired *to write books*, but that those books were written by inspired men. It is the man who was inspired, and not the book. Nor is the man inspired as a writer, but as a man. The distinction between revelation and inspiration is modern, and was first made since the Reformation; and is rejected by recent writers of standing, both Orthodox and Liberal.*

2. We do not say that the writers of the New Testament were infallible. Infallibility is one thing, inspiration is another. One may, indeed, be infallibly inspired

* "Revelation and inspiration are, according to the Scripture, not essentially different. The school theory, therefore, which has prevailed since the seventeenth century, which arbitrarily distinguishes between them, is foreign from the Scripture views." — *Hahn, Lehr. des Christ. Glaub.*, § 24.

but one may also be inspired without being infallible. He may have truth of a higher order set before his mind in a supernatural manner; but in reducing it to thoughts, and reporting it in language, he may mix his own opinions and weaknesses with it.

3. We assert that one may become an *authority* without being infallible. He who has peculiar opportunities of knowledge becomes an authority to others. A traveller from China is an authority (in matters relating to China) to those who have not been there, though no one deems him infallible. Yet wiser men than himself defer to his statements because he has been where they have not been. We may assert that the writers of the New Testament have been where we have not been. We may say that they were placed by an inward influence on a higher plane of insight, so as to see spiritual facts and laws which we do not see.

4. Not that they tell us things never told before. Their statements are as old as truth, as old as humanity. They tell us what has been guessed at, suspected, hoped, and believed, by thousands. But what others have *thought*, they have *seen*; what others report as opinions, they report as facts; what others give as their thoughts, they give as their testimony. They have not opined these things, but have seen and heard them.

5. The evidence of this is to be found, first, in their writings. Taking the undoubted writings of Paul and the other apostles, and neglecting, for the present, the Gospels, we notice that—

6. The *height* and *depth* of their insight indicates a peculiar inspiration. We give a single example, taken at random. When Socrates was condemned to die, a friend said “What I mourn for, Socrates, is the injustice with which they treat you.” — “What!” said Socrates, “would you prefer that I should suffer justly?”

Peter says, in his first Epistle: "It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, rather than to do evil doing." — "If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye."

We have here the same noble thought uttered by Socrates and by Peter. But Socrates was a man of genius, royally endowed by nature: such as appears only once in many thousand years. Peter was not a man of genius: for we see no evidence of any peculiar natural endowment in him, or in James and John, before the resurrection. Nor do great geniuses go in groups, to be gathered, two or three at a time, out of a crowd of Galilean fishermen. The proof of inspiration is, not that these writers say better things than had ever been said before, but that these unlettered men, each in respect not of poor endowment, should be all so changed by some influence, as that their familiar and contemporaneous speech and writing should abound with the same lofty sentiments and profound thoughts which have been admired and preserved for thousands of years, when uttered in rare moments by the select geniuses of the earth.

7. The living harmony of their opinions indicates a peculiar inspiration.

By studying the ideas and opinions of these writers, we shall see that they have an organic relation to each other. Their minds are penetrated, through and through, by the actual truth; and all their thoughts are polarized by it. In most men we find inconsistency and incoherence. The grasp of thought breaks down somewhere; and some of their opinions are accidental or hereditary, having no binding coherence with the rest. But, in the minds of these writers, all opinions have a moral significance, a relation to central truths. This indicates an interior, organizing principle of life, out of which their thoughts grow. This

coherence cannot in their case come from philosophic reflection, for of this there is no trace: it must come, then, from a living insight; that is, an inspiration.*

8. But it sometimes happens, that narrow men (men of one idea, as we call them) are comparatively consistent in their opinions: they see but one side of truth, and therefore can easily bring all their thoughts into harmony with it. But the New-Testament writers are remarkable for the width of their view, for the range of their thought. They recognize fully all the antagonist facts of the spiritual life. They give both sides of every question. They teach human freedom and divine providence; they teach that salvation is a gift and a reward: they recognize the truths in monotheism and in pantheism, in naturalism and supernaturalism. This breadth of view, which causes their writings to be appealed to by all sects and parties, and to furnish arguments to all schools of thinkers, is a manifest proof that they stood at the centre of spiritual life and light, whence these rays of truth issue in opposite directions.

9. It would confirm our conviction of the fact of their special inspiration, were we to compare the writings of the New Testament with other sacred books, as the writings of Confucius and Mencius, with the Vedas and Puranas, with the Zendavesta and the Koran. The peculiarity of the New Testament would then appear to be a greater clearness, sweep, and depth of insight, but especially a more practical, solid, and substantial character of knowledge.

10. Looking now to see what account these writings themselves give of the inspiration of their writers, we find

* To show the truth of the statements in this and the previous paragraphs, many pages would be necessary. But in this direction, we are persuaded, lies the strongest proof of inspiration.

it nowhere asserted that they were inspired to write, but everywhere that they, like all their fellow-disciples, were **inspired men.**

(a) Jesus announces the Holy Spirit which he is to send to lead his disciples into all truth, in John xiv. xv., and xvi.

(b) In Acts ii., and elsewhere, we have an account of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and of the coming of the same spirit upon all who were **baptized, and became Christians.**

(c) In the Epistles, it is everywhere asserted and assumed, that the whole body of Christians are inspired by **the Holy Spirit.**

11. The objections urged against this view are mostly against an inspiration of infallibility. It is said that these writers contradict each other in unessential particulars, — that they were ignorant of some things, and mistaken as to others. All this may be, and yet not disprove our assertion, that they possessed a peculiar inspiration, not resulting from natural genius, but from a special divine influence, which placed them on a higher plane of insight, and enabled them to become authorities on matters of religious truth to men wiser than themselves in other respects.

12. In concluding this part of the argument, we say, that, if with the aid of these hints we study the New-Testament writings, we shall find in them a fulness of thought, and be convinced that the Spirit of the Lord has given them a marvellous liberty, fidelity, and insight. And we shall listen to them as to those who have been where we have not been, and seen what we have not seen; and so possess an authority over our wills, which yet is **quite different from infallibility.**

SECT. 8. — *Inspiration not Infallible nor Verbal.**

The doctrine of the plenary inspiration of Scripture, after having been nearly abandoned by theologians, has lately been reproduced in its grossest form by Gaussen and his American translator, Rev. Mr. Kirk.

Inspiration, as defined by Gaussen, is "that inexplicable power which the Divine Spirit formerly exercised over the authors of the Holy Scriptures, to guide them even in the employment of the words they were to use, and to preserve them from all error, as well as from every omission."

"We aim," says he, "to establish, by the word of God, that the Scriptures are from God, that all the Scriptures are from God, and that every part of the Scripture is from God."

Let us consider the arguments in support of this kind of inspiration, and the objections to them.

I. — Plenary inspiration is *necessary*, that we may know with certainty what we ought to believe.

Great stress is laid upon this supposed *necessity* both by Gaussen and Kirk.

"The book so written," say they, "is the word of God, and binds the conscience of the world; and nothing else does so bind it, even though it were the writings of Paul and Peter.

"With the infidel, whether he be Christian in name or otherwise, the sharp sword of a perfect inspiration will be found at last indispensable. If the ground is conceded to him, that there is a single passage in the Bible that is not divine, then we are disarmed; for he will be sure to apply this privilege to the very passages which most fully oppose

* This section is also printed in the Appendix to "Orthodoxy; its Truths and Errors."

his pride, passion, and error. How is the conscience of a wicked race to be bound down by a chain, one link of which is weak?"

We may reply, that, to assume the necessity of a theory, does not prove its truth. The only legitimate proof of a theory is by an induction of facts. This method of beginning by a supposed necessity, this looking first at consequences, has always been fruitful of false and empty theories. The great advance in modern science has come from substituting the inductive for the ideological method. Find what the facts say, and the consequences will take care of themselves. An argument from consequences is usually only an appeal to prejudices.

Again: This argument is fatal to the arguments drawn from the Scriptures themselves. In arguing from the Scripture to prove that every passage is divine, we have of course, no right to *assume* that every passage is divine, for that is the very thing to be proved. Then the texts which we quote to prove our position may themselves not be divine; and, if we grant that, "we are disarmed." For, according to this argument, nothing can be proved conclusively from Scripture unless we believe in plenary inspiration: then plenary inspiration itself cannot be proved from Scripture. But Gaussen admits, that this doctrine can be proved "only by the Scriptures;" therefore (according to this argument) it cannot be proved at all.

If, therefore, the doctrine of plenary inspiration is necessary "to bind the conscience of the world," it is a doctrine incapable of proof. If, on the other hand, it can be proved, it is then clearly not necessary "to bind the conscience of the world."

But again: This theory of plenary inspiration does *not* bind the consciences of men. If men are naturally disposed (as Messrs. Gaussen and Kirk maintain) to deny

and disbelieve the doctrines and statements of the Bible, they have ample opportunity of doing so, notwithstanding their belief in this theory. For, after admitting that the words of Scripture, just as they stand, are perfectly true and given by God, the question comes, What do they mean? For instance, I wish, we will suppose, to deny the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. Now, you quote to me the text, Rom. ix. 5: "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever," which is the strongest text in the Bible in support of that doctrine. Now, though I believe in the doctrine of plenary inspiration, I am not obliged to accept this passage as proof of the Deity of Christ. For, I can — 1. Assert that the verse is an interpolation; 2. Assert that it is wrongly pointed; 3. Assert that it is mistranslated; 4. Assert that Christ is called God in an inferior sense, as God over the Church. And, as a matter of fact, these are the arguments always used, even by those who deny the doctrine of a plenary inspiration. They seldom or never accuse the writer of a mistake, but always rely on a supposed mis-translation or misinterpretation, in order to avoid the force of a passage. Hence, also, we find believers in this doctrine of plenary inspiration differing in opinion on a thousand matters, and with no probability of ever coming to an agreement.

II. — It is argued that many passages of the New Testament plainly teach the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible.

The passages quoted by Gaussen, and mainly relied upon, are 2 Tim. iii. 16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration," &c.; 2 Pet. i. 27, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved," &c. Besides these, he refers to many texts in the Old and New Testaments; but his chief stress is laid on these.

But in reply we may say that these passages refer only to the Old-Testament Scriptures. It is well known that the first may be translated so as to read, "All Scripture, given by inspiration, is profitable," &c. But it is reply enough to both these passages to say, that neither of them indicates what kind of inspiration is intended. They assert an inspiration, which we also maintain. But they do *not* assert a verbal inspiration, nor one which makes the Scriptures *infallible*, but simply one which makes them *profitable*.

The stress laid on the passage, 2 Tim. iii. 16, "All Scripture," &c., is itself an argument against the theory of plenary inspiration. The most which can be made of this text by *any* punctuation or translation, is, that all the Scripture is written by inspired men. What was the degree or kind of their inspiration is not in the least indicated. It might have been verbal, it might have been the inspiration of suggestion or of superintendence, or the general inspiration of all Christians.

Gaussen's only argument on this point is, "that it is the *writing* which is said to be inspired, and writing must be in words; hence the inspiration must be verbal." To this we must reply, that inspired writing can only mean what is written by inspired men. The writing itself cannot be inspired. This argument is too flimsy to be dwelt upon.

But further still: there is another argument which lies against every attempt to prove plenary inspiration out of the Scripture. *Every such attempt is necessarily reasoning in a circle.* Gaussen and Kirk have labored earnestly to reply to this argument, but in vain. The answer they make is, "We are not reasoning with infidels, but with Christians. We address men who respect the Scriptures, and who admit their truth."

“The Scriptures are inspired, we affirm, because, being authentic and true, they declare themselves inspired; and the Scriptures are plenarily inspired, because, being inspired, they say that they are so totally and without any exception.”

But we answer Messrs. Gaussen and Kirk thus:—
“You are indeed reasoning with Christians, not with Deists; but you are reasoning with Christians who do not believe that *every passage* of Scripture is infallibly inspired. To prove your doctrine from any particular passages or verbal expressions, you must prove that those particular passages and expressions are not themselves errors. You yourselves assert that this cannot be done, except we believe these passages to be infallibly inspired. Therefore you must assume infallible inspiration in order to prove infallible inspiration. In other words, you beg the question instead of arguing it.”

In this vicious circle, the advocates of a verbal inspiration of infallibility are necessarily imprisoned whenever they attempt to argue from the words of Scripture. They contend that one must believe their theory in order to be sure that any passage is absolutely true; and then they quote passages to prove their theory, as if they were absolutely true.

III. — The theory of plenary inspiration, it is said, is simple, precise, intelligible, and easy to be applied.

We admit this to be true. It has this merit in common with the opposite theory of no inspiration. Both are simple, precise, and very easy of application. But simplicity is not always a sign of truth. The facts of nature and life are more apt to be complex than simple. Theories distinguished by their simplicity most commonly ignore or omit a part of the facts. Simplistic theories are generally one-sided and partial. Materialism, atheism, idealism, fatal

ism, are all very simple theories, and explain all difficulties with a marvellous rapidity. This makes them, at first, attractive to the intellect, which always loves clear and distinct views; but afterward, when it is seen that they obtain clearness by means of shallowness, they are found unsatisfactory.

IV. — The quotations from the Old Testament, by Jesus and his apostles, show that they regarded its language as infallibly inspired.

This argument, upon which great stress is laid both by Prof. Gaussen and Mr. Kirk, though plausible at first sight, becomes wholly untenable on examination.

Thus, in the temptation of Jesus, in his reply to the tempter, he says, "Thou shalt not live by bread alone;" the whole force of the argument is said to depend on the single word "alone."

Replying to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, he says, "Have ye not read that God says, *I am* the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Here the whole stress of the argument is said to rest on the use of the verb in the present tense. "*I am.*"

Arguing with the Pharisees: "How did David, by the Spirit, call him *Lord*, saying, The Lord said to my Lord, &c.?" Here the argument depends on the use of the single word, "*Lord.*"

Many more instances could be produced of the same kind; and Gaussen contends, that when Jesus and his apostles thus rest their argument on the force of a single word of the Old Testament, they must have believed that the very words were given by inspiration. For otherwise the writers might have not chosen the right word to express their thought in each particular case. And, unless the Jews had also believed in the verbal inspiration of

their Scriptures, they would have replied that these particular words might have been errors.

Plausible as this argument may seem, it turns out to be wholly empty and worthless. Whenever any writer is admitted to be an authority, then his words become authoritative, and arguments are necessarily based on single words and expressions. In all such cases, we assume that he chose the best words by which to convey his thought, and yet we do not ascribe to him any inspiration or infallibility.

Thus, go into our courts of law, and you will hear the language of the United-States Constitution, of the acts of legislature, of previous decisions of the courts, argued from, word by word. Counsel argue by the hour upon the force and weight of single words in the authorities. Judges in their charges instruct the jury to determine the life and death of the criminal according to the letter of the law. And this they do, necessarily, according to the rule, "*Cum recedit a litera, judex transit in legislatorem.*" But will any one maintain, that the counsel and court believe that the legislature was infallibly inspired to choose the very language which would convey their meaning?

In this very argument for plenary inspiration, Gaussen and his associates rest their argument on the single word "all," in the text, "All Scripture is given by inspiration," &c. Yet, say they, we are not assuming that this text is plenary inspired; for that, we admit, would be begging the question. If, then, Mr. Gaussen can argue from the force of the single word *all*, without assuming the doctrine of plenary inspiration, why could not Jesus and his apostles argue from single words, without assuming the doctrine of plenary inspiration?

There is, however, a passage in Paul (Gal. iii. 16), in which the apostle quotes a text from the Old Testament,

and lays the whole stress of his argument on two letters. "He says not, 'And to seeds' (*σπέρματι*), as so many, but as of one, 'And to thy seed' (*σπέρματι*).'" According to Gausson's argument, Paul must have believed in the inspiration of the letters. But Gausson is careful not to adduce this instance, which seems at first so much in his favor. For, in fact, both in Hebrew and Greek, as in English "seed" is a collective noun, and does mean *many* in the singular. The argument of Paul, therefore, falls through, and it is evident that he is no example to be imitated here, in laying stress on one or two letters. Most modern interpreters admit that he made a mistake; and so, among the ancients, did Jerome, who, nevertheless, said the argument "was good enough for the foolish Galatians."

Having thus replied, very briefly, but we believe sufficiently, to the main arguments in support of this theory, we say in conclusion, that it cannot be true, for the following reasons, which we simply state, and do not now attempt to unfold:—

1. The New-Testament writers nowhere claim to be infallibly inspired to write. If they had been infallibly inspired to write the Gospels and Epistles, they certainly ought to have announced this important fact; instead of which, Luke gives as his reason for writing, not that God inspired him to write, but that, "inasmuch as others have taken in hand" to write, it seemed good to him also to do the same, and that for the benefit of Theophilus. John and Paul assert the truth of what they say, but not on account of their being inspired to write, but because they are disciples and apostles.

2. The differences in the accounts of the same transactions show that their inspiration was not verbal.

These differences appear on every page of any Harmony of the New Testament. They are numerous, but

unimportant; they go to prove the truth of the narrative, and give probability to the main Gospel statements. But they utterly disprove the theory of plenary inspiration.

3. Paul declares that some things which he says are "of the Lord," other things "of himself;" that in regard to some things he was inspired, in regard to others not.

4. Every writer in the New Testament has a style of his own, and there is no appearance of his being merely an amanuensis.

5. While the New-Testament writers lay no claim to any such inspiration as this theory assumes, they do claim for themselves, and for all other Christians, another kind of inspiration, which is sufficient for all the facts, and which gives them ample authority over our faith and life, and makes them independent sources of Christian truth.

SECT. 9. — *Another Theory of Inspiration.*

The method we have pursued in this inquiry has been this. We first examined the opinions now existing, and which have formerly been held on the subject. We found reason for thinking that the question was yet not settled, and that a better view than any now prevailing might be attained. We then looked at the facts, at the traits in the New-Testament writings which difference them from other books, and satisfied ourselves that the writers possessed *some* peculiar and special inspiration. We then proceeded to ask what this is; and meeting on our way the common Protestant theory of a verbal inspiration, we examined it, and have found it destitute of support, and on many accounts objectionable. We now ask, Can any better view of inspiration be found? and how will it bear on the authority of the Scriptures, the rights of reason, and the teachings of the Church? And this will close our *examination of the subject.*

1. We will first consider the capacity in man for inspiration in general. Inspiration, in the largest sense, is an inward sight, -- a sight of truth, which we obtain not through the outward organs, but by an inward organ of vision. Many deny that such an inward vision is possible. They say all our knowledge must come from sensation and reflection. But, if so, man is not capable of spiritual religion: for spiritual religion cannot come either by sensation or reflection. Not, surely, by sensation; for the senses only show us outward things, not truths, principles, or ideas. Not by reflection either; for reflection results in propositions believed on grounds of reasoning. But reasoning can only give us probability, not certainty. It does not give us an experience of truth itself; it does not show us the spiritual facts, but only opinions concerning them.

But we know that we can *see* the spiritual laws, and the truths which are above the domain of the understanding. We know that we have sometimes inward experiences of truth, in which we see that justice, holiness, and love are infinitely true, beautiful, and blessed. We have a sight of the things themselves. There are moments in which we draw near to God, and feel his presence and power around us and within us. These moments of insight, of spiritual experience, are all that make us *certain* of any thing. All certain conviction, positive knowledge, living faith in God, justice, goodness, come from such insights as these. They are the foundation of solid piety, of real virtue. All else is imagination, opinion, probability: this is knowledge. By an inward vision, we have a knowledge of the spiritual world, just as by an outward vision we have a knowledge of the material world. If we had no senses by which to perceive the outward world, we could know nothing about it. We

might believe there was such a world on the assurance of our friends, but we could not know it. If we had no senses by which to perceive the inward world, we could not know it; we could only believe in it on the assurance of others.

But to act with energy in any direction, it is necessary to act from knowledge. It is necessary to have a conviction, amounting to certainty, of the reality of the object which is the reason of our action. The more *knowledge* we have of the outward world, the more decision (other things being equal) we shall show in our actions in relation to it. In like manner, the more knowledge we have of God, truth, justice, virtue, the more decision we shall show in our piety and our goodness.

But now one thing more is to be remarked. This certainty or knowledge, whether of outward or inward realities, does not come from a *single* perception. Our senses may deceive us in any one instance. To correct the illusions of the senses, it is necessary to repeat the observation, and by the ear to correct the errors of the eye; by the eye again, those of the ear; by the hand, those of both. Just so, one vision, one inward experience, does not give us certainty. That may have been an illusion, an imagination only. Nor does certainty come even from repeating one kind of spiritual experience. We must exercise *all* our moral faculties to attain a solid assurance of the reality of God, of truth, of goodness.

We must add to the sight of these things a repeated and varied experience of them. We must dwell in love, and so we shall dwell in God. The life is the light of men. Prayer to God gives us confidence in the reality of virtue: active benevolence assures us of the presence of God. Thus a saint, who has spent years in solitary prayer in a hermitage, is beset, after all, with terrible

doubts as to the reality of religion. He calls them temptations of the Devil, but they come because he has not verified his religious experiences by humane action. And so the man of morality or philanthropy, without piety, fears at last that he has wasted his life, and accomplished nothing; his goodness wants life, love, and beauty. There is an inspiration of the heart, of the mind, and of the will; and the one must verify the other. While working for God, and loving God, we know him. While serving man, we are drawn to God. While praying to God, we are drawn to man.

There is, then, a capacity in man for inspiration; that is, for perceiving the awful and beautiful realities of the spiritual world. God is always manifesting these realities to us, in proportion as we, in humility and love, open our souls to receive them. For, to *perceive*, we must *receive*. When we open our eyes, God shows himself to us. When we draw nigh to him, he draws nigh to us. He inspires us, he breathes his truth into us, he brings it in contact with our souls, whenever we sit still and are quiet, and give ourselves up humbly to be led in his way.

2. Thus far we have spoken of inspiration in general. We now ask, in the second place, *What is the peculiarizing of Christian inspiration?* What is that special influence which is known as the coming of the Holy Ghost?

The answer of the New Testament is very clear and decided. The Holy Ghost is an inward revelation of Jesus Christ. When Jesus predicts the coming of the Holy Spirit, it is in these remarkable words: "If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, *for he dwelleth with you,*

and shall be in you." Is not this clearly Christ himself, who dwells *with thee now*, and shall be *in thee hereafter*? If there is any doubt of it, read the next words: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; *but ye see me*: because I live, ye shall live also. *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*" Directly after, he says, "He that loves me, I will love him, and *will manifest myself unto him.*" Again, he promises that "my Father and I will come and make our abode" with the disciples who love. And again, "*I go away, and come unto you.*" It is true that the Lord speaks in other places of the Comforter as though it were different from himself, as when he says, "I will send you from my Father, and he shall testify of me;" and again he speaks of the Father sending the Comforter *in his name*, i.e., in his spirit or power.

Again: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you."—"He shall guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself, but what he shall hear he shall speak. He shall receive of mine, and show it unto you." And directly following this: "A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to my Father." It is evident that Jesus speaks somewhat figuratively here, and personifies the Holy Spirit, in order to make them feel the *reality* of this influence more than they otherwise could; for, to prevent misunderstanding, he immediately adds, "*These things I have spoken to you in parables.*" But we may consider this much as certainly intended: 1. That the *Holy Ghost*, or *Christian Inspiration*, makes Christ inwardly present to the soul. 2. That this inspiration is an *influence* which comes primarily from God, as all good influence has its source and

fountain in him. 3. That Christ's active love for them helps to bring this influence to them, which manifests to them both himself and the Father. It is something more than an influence to put *Christian truth* in their souls: it shows them that truth as *living truth* embodied in their Lord. It gives them the sight of the beauty of holiness in him.

Now, all the New Testament corresponds to this view. Paul, speaking of his conversion, says, "When it pleased God to reveal his Son *in me*;" and, speaking of the Holy Spirit, says, "The Lord *is the Spirit*." Christian inspiration, then, is an influence from God, which brings Christ close to our souls, so that we can see God *in him*.

Christian inspiration is being under the personal influence of Christ present to the soul, and manifesting God to the soul. We sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. "I am crucified with Christ, but I live; yet not I, but Christ who liveth in me."

3. And, in the third place, we see, by the Scriptures themselves, that this was the one and only kind of inspiration; and this inspiration all Christians had. It was common to all. There was but one Spirit in the early Church, though it took different forms of manifestation. This is distinctly and explicitly asserted by Paul. "There are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit."—"To one is given by the Spirit the word of *wisdom*; to another, *knowledge*, by the same Spirit; to another, *faith*, by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of *healing*, by the same Spirit; and to others, *miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers tongues, interpretation of tongues*." All these are specially enumerated; but nothing is said of a separate gift for *writing Scriptures*, still less of a different inspiration for that purpose. We may safely conclude, therefore, that the universal Christian inspiration was adequate for this

end; and that the inspiration of the writers of the Gospels and Epistles was the gift of *wisdom* or of *knowledge*, here specified.

4. And here it is proper to remark, that, as this inspiration of the Holy Ghost was universal in the Church then, and shared by every real Christian, so it is universal in the Church now, and shared by every real Christian now. Paul distinctly asserts, that "no one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." The reception of the Holy Ghost, at first, was an integral part of Christianity; and what was essential then must be essential always. A man cannot be a real Christian except by a Christian experience, an integral part of which is the reception of the Holy Spirit.

It is true that the *gifts* of the Spirit are not the same now that they were then, for the same gifts are not needed. We do not work physical miracles, nor speak with tongues: these were for signs then, to call attention to Christianity; and, the attention of the world having been called, they are wanted no more. But let them be wanted, and no doubt they would be reproduced again by the living Spirit.

In the apostolic times, the power of the Holy Spirit was more marked and greater than now. The stream of spiritual life was then near its source; it was confined to a narrow channel; it was hemmed in by a more obstinate resistance; and it fell with cataract force from rock to rock. Its foaming waters shone in the sunlight, and its thunder was heard afar. Now it winds more tranquilly along, through meadows and fields, giving fertility to many a mile of cornfields, and bending around the peaceful hills. But it is the same stream then as now. It had more power then, but it has a wider expanse to-day. It broke out in glittering miracles, and strange gifts of speech, in a marvellous insight, in an unrivalled foresight, in forms

adapted to astonish the world, and draw its attention to the new Church. But the Holy Spirit gives life to-day, as at first, to every Christian soul; changes belief into conviction; takes away the heart of stone, and gives a heart of flesh; brings the sinner to repentance; makes the lame in soul to leap as a hart, and he whose tongue was spiritually dumb to sing songs of grateful praise to God.

5. But how, it may be asked, did the Holy Spirit inspire the writers of the New Testament, so as to fit them for their work? What was the "gift of the Spirit" which enabled Luke to write a Gospel, or Paul to write an Epistle?

If we suppose the fundamental fact in this influence to be in every case "*an inward revelation of Christ*;" if this is the one Spirit, the same in all,—then, we may suppose, the separate gifts were developed in each Christian according to his natural and original faculties. To one man, the inward revelation of Christ gives the power of *working miracles*, because he has something in his nature to serve as a basis for that gift. To another, it communicates the power of *speaking with tongues*, because he has a constitutional power of language for its basis. And so of the rest.

Now, let men of a historical turn of mind, as we may suppose Matthew and Luke to have been, to have received this spiritual influence, which lifted them inwardly into communion with Christ, and what would be its effect in developing their historical talent? The love of Christ would give them a profound interest in every fact of his life; it would give a tenfold diligence and fidelity of research, of memory, of accurate statement. Nothing would be trivial or unimportant to them. They would, in the simplicity of their faith and its holy truthfulness, lay aside all prejudice, feeling, passion; and their minds would be

kept full of what Lord Bacon calls "dry light," — that is, pure from emotion or interest. They would make themselves what the evangelists truly are, — perfect mirrors before the facts, to reflect them just as they find them undistorted by private partialities or antipathies. Writing under such an influence, we should have the guarantee of a substantial accuracy in every thing of importance. Where they knew nothing, they would write nothing. They still would not be infallible, but we might be sure they would not err in any thing essential. Their writings would show that they had the WORD OF KNOWLEDGE.

Then how would this view of inspiration apply to the writers of the Epistles? In close intercourse with the mind of Christ, they would see clearly Christian principles, and their application to the wants of the times, and to human life universally. Yet, as each of them by nature would have some ruling tendencies of thought, these would be manifest in their writings. The Spirit would not repress their individualities, but rather develop them. Thus we find the mental peculiarities of Paul, James, John, Peter, all very distinct and manifest in their writings. But it would repress excess and ultraism, give balance of thought, give depth and breadth of view, and cause their words to be weighty with meaning and truth. Their writings would show that to them was given by the Spirit, the WORD OF WISDOM.

6. And now, we ask, What is the position of the New Testament as a source of truth, compared with reason, the Church, and the inward illumination of every Christian?

The New Testament is a source of truth; but that is not its chief office. Its chief value is, that it is a means of bringing men to God. Nevertheless, it is also a source of truth. We go to it for truth; not merely to confirm what we know already, but to show us something new. Protes-

tants ascribe authority to the Scripture, and call it the rule of faith. Now, how does the view of inspiration I have presented, affect the authority of the Scriptures?

I have said that the writers were inspired by a spirit which all true Christians share to-day. But the degree of the early inspiration was much greater than now. It rolled a stronger flood through their souls than through ours. We see this in all the other gifts of the Spirit in apostolic times, — miracles, healings, tongues. We have nothing of the sort now; except, perhaps, some occasional and obscure phenomenon. Therefore there is every reason to believe, that the *word of wisdom* was given in far greater measure then. Their opportunities of knowledge then were far greater than ours. The Spirit lifted them to a nearness to Christ which we do not now attain. This is their authority, then, as we have before said, — the authority of knowledge, of insight, of nearness to the facts and the truths to which they witness. “They speak that they do know, and testify that they have seen.” This makes them just what Paul claims for them, “able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter which killeth, but of the spirit which giveth life.” — “We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” — “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

He adds presently, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels.” It does not make them infallible: they can err, and they did err. Their knowledge increases. Peter, though having received this gift, yet needed a special revelation to teach him to baptize the Gentiles. The authority they have is that of honest men who have seen and known, by a deep inward experience, what they profess to speak

of. This authority even extends to their *language*. They choose the right words to express their meaning. Their words, no less than their thoughts, deserve to be studied; for their thought penetrates into their words. The keener the insight, the more living the thought, so much the more precise *is always* the expression. They speak "not in the words which men's wisdom teacheth, but which the spirit teacheth."

7. "But, if you admit they are not infallible, how shall we distinguish their errors from their truths?" By their own rule. They say, "Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God." The Scriptures are a rule of faith, but not the *only* rule. There are three co-ordinate sources of Christian truth. The same spirit which speaks in the New Testament speaks to the individual soul. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned. *But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.*" We therefore test the SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE by the SPIRIT IN OUR HEARTS.

And the third rule of faith is the SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH. The universal Christian sentiment, the faith and conviction of the Christian Church, is the work of the Holy Spirit. So we test one by the other.

When we doubt whether any thing in the New Testament is a part of inspiration, as we read it there, we compare it with what God says in our soul, and with what he has said in the universal faith of the Christian Church.

When we doubt whether any thing in our own soul is really a divine intuition of truth, we test *that*, first by Scripture, then by the faith of the Church.

When we doubt whether any thing taught by the Church is true, we test that again, first by the Scripture, and second by the Spirit in our own soul.

All this supposes that a man is honestly seeking for Christian truth. But that we must assume in any inquiry concerning the rule of faith. Any rule of faith is a rule only for him who opens his mind honestly to the light, and seeks to know the truth that he may do it.

8. We ask next, What is the relation of this view to the exercise of reason? Suppose we find any thing in the Scripture which seems to us unreasonable, what shall we do? In reply, we make another supposition.

Suppose a friend, in whose honesty and good sense you confide, has been in the heart of Africa, and tells you of what he has seen there. Among his statements is something very strange, which contradicts all your previous opinions. What do you do? *He has been there.* He is not infallible, to be sure; but still your reason is not infallible either. If you are sure that he had good opportunity for observation, you would be likely to conclude that there was something in what he asserts. It would be reasonable to do so. It would have been reasonable for the African prince, who was told water could become solid, to believe it on good testimony, however at first it seemed unreasonable.

The office of reason is to criticise, examine, weigh; it makes us hold back our belief in testimony, until we can really and heartily bestow it.

Our result, then, is, that reason is related to *inspiration*; as it is to testimony, to credible testimony of any other kind. Its office is to examine the testimony, to sift it closely, and, if the testimony is sufficient, to accept the new knowledge which is thus offered to the mind.

We cannot, therefore, make our reason a *source* of Christian knowledge. It is not a witness to communicate facts, but an advocate to sift testimony.

Summary.

The conclusions to which we have arrived may be thus summed up:—

1. The opinions which prevail on the inspiration of the Scriptures are either narrow and defective, or vague and indefinite; showing that a revision of the subject is needed.

2. The true method of inquiry is to examine, first, the facts before us; and then to inquire what view of inspiration best arranges and harmonizes those facts.

3. The writings of the New Testament are remarkable for depth, height, and sweep of insight; they are also remarkable for precise thought and luminous expression; also for solidity of substance and weight of experience; and, finally, for living and live-giving energy.

4. When we consider who the writers were, and how they were brought together, we cannot ascribe these qualities in their writings to peculiar genius or culture. There must, then, have been some great influence which acted upon all of them, and gave them the power of thought and utterance.

5. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit which was to come after him. The apostles describe the coming of this Holy Spirit. In this influence all believers shared, but it operated differently on different individuals.

6. The main work of the Holy Spirit was to produce faith in Christ, and to bring believers into an inward and personal relation with him, and putting his gospel into their hearts.

7. By this experience, the writers of the New Testament were not rendered infallible; but they were placed on a higher plane of experience and insight, where they saw truths invisible to those on a lower level.

8. The authority of these writers is that of witnesses, who have been where we have not, and have seen what we have not; and who speak that they do know, and testify that they have seen.

9. The doctrine of an infallible inspiration rests on no basis, and the arguments by which it is supported are wholly unsatisfactory.

10. Nevertheless, all inspiration of thought affects language; and the more clear the insight, the more just will be the expression.

11. There are three sources of Christian knowledge: the New-Testament Scriptures, Christian experience, and the testimony of the Church universal. In seeking Christian truth, we must have recourse to all of these, proving all things, holding fast whatever is good, and abstaining from all that appears evil.

12. The Scriptures are to be revered, and handled with deference and love, as the writings of holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They were nearer the beginning of Christianity than we, nearer the fountain of life; and the more we study their words in an humble and receptive spirit, the more we shall find them profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

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(1) In ONE GOD, the HEAVENLY FATHER, all-wise, holy, just and good.

Him alone we worship, (Matt. vi., 9; John iv., 23; Eph. iii., 14; iv., 6,) not Christ, nor Mary.

He is the ever-present spirit, in whom all things exist. (Acts xvii., 28.)

The Christian idea of God's character, government and ways is suggested by a wise and loving human fatherhood. (See 5 and 6.) Luke xi., 11, 13; Deut. viii., 5.) The Divine fatherhood is *universal*, reaching out to the wandering and prodigal, (Luke xv., 3-32,) and caring for every soul, (Luke xv., 4,) in every land and race. (Jonah iv., 11; 1 Tim. ii., 4.)

(2) In JESUS CHRIST, the well-beloved Son of God.

He is *the* Son, the highest manifestation of the filial spirit in religion, (Gal. iv., 6, 7,) and of the holy character, in which true sonship to God consists. (John x., 36; Rom. viii., 14, 29; Heb. ii., 10, 11, Rev. xxi., 7.)

In the New Testament he is always represented as *subordinate* to God, (1 Cor. xv., 28; Phil. ii., 11; see also John xvii., 3; 1 Cor. viii., 6; Heb. xii., 23, 24,) but as having the Spirit of God without measure. (John iii., 34; Acts x., 38; Col. ii., 9, compare Eph. iii., 19.)

"God was in Christ," (2 Cor. v., 19,) but Christ was not God.

(3) In the HOLY SPIRIT, the Presence and Power of God in the Soul and Life.

It is "the spirit of God," (that is, *God himself* as present in the soul,) corresponding to "the spirit of man," (that is, *man himself*.) (See 1 Cor. ii., 10, 11.)

The Divine Spirit is *with and in all souls*, (see 10) (Ps cxxxix., 7; Job xxxii., 8; John i., 9;) manifested in the voice of conscience and in all goodness, and especially in the religious life. — In its highest manifestations it is called in Scripture the Holy Spirit.

(4) In HUMAN NATURE, as not ruined but incomplete.

Man is not fallen from a primitive state of holiness, but is *imperfectly developed*. (1 Cor. xv., 46, 47.) Being imperfect he is liable to sin; as a moral agent he is responsible for sinning. The essence of sin is the failure of the higher nature of man to rule his lower nature. (Rom. viii., 13.)

Men often inherit both the good and the evil traits and tendencies of their ancestors; but they can not inherit guilt. (Matt. xxiii., 10; xix., 14.)

Human Nature is made sacred by the indwelling presence of God.

Humanity is not tending downward, but is Divinely guided from lower to higher forms of moral and spiritual life.

(5) In the CERTAINTY OF RETRIBUTION, as not to be evaded nor transferred.

No sin can escape punishment (Rom. ii., 6; Col. iii., 25) "The *way of transgressors is hard*," (Prov. xiii., 15,) not merely the final results of sin. The terrible degradation and suffering that sooner or later follow wilful transgression, either here or hereafter, are the real "hell."

While the consequences of the good or evil conduct of one are often shared by many, (Rom. v., 19, 21,) demerit and penalty, like merit and reward, are strictly personal and untransferable. (Ezek. xviii., 20.)

Penalty is not arbitrary, but is involved in transgression and follows *naturally* from it in accordance with Divine laws (Gal. vi., 7.) God is everywhere and constantly acting through natural law.

(6) In the BENEFICENT PURPOSE of all divine penalties, as disciplinary and remedial.

The object of these penalties is not merely to "vindicate law," but also to correct wrong tendencies, to discipline and to save.

Retributive suffering becomes remedial when it arouses the Conscience to a deeper sense of the guilt of wilful transgression. It thus prepares the Soul to be touched by the Divine Love, and awakened to a higher life, or "regenerated." (Dent. viii., 5; Ezek. xviii., 23, 32; Rom. ii., 4.)

The Justice and the Mercy of God are harmonious and inseparable.

(7) In REPENTANCE AND FAITH, as the only conditions of Divine Forgiveness.

The ATONEMENT, in the New Testament use of the word, is simply the *reconciliation of man to God*. (Rom. v., 10, 11; 2 Cor. v., 19; Eph. ii., 16.) — It does not mean that Christ suffered as a substitute for us, to obtain for us Divine forgiveness. Such substituted expiation is morally impossible, because neither merits nor penalties can be transferred; and it would be needless, because God has always been ready to forgive the sincerely penitent, in the only sense in which forgiveness is possible. (Luke xv., 20; Ezek. xviii., 21—23.) — "Atone" originally meant, not to expiate, but to "make at one" or reconcile. (Acts vii., 26.)

Forgiveness removes the sense of estrangement from God, *but does not immediately remit any other penalty*. All other consequences of transgression continue (see 5), though sometimes modified by repentance.

Conversion is the Soul's turning to God in repentance and faith.

FAITH, in this religious sense, is different from Belief. It is loyalty and trust. It is self-surrender to God's righteousness and love, or *religious self-consecration*. — Belief is expressed in doctrine; Faith, in character and life.

Faith in Christ is discipleship to him, expressed in loyalty to his spirit and life (Matt. xviii., 6.) In another aspect it is self-surrender to the holiness and fatherly love of God, as revealed in the teachings and life of Jesus. (Acts xvi., 31; Gal. iii., 26.)

(8) In SALVATION, as moral and spiritual Health.

Salvation is not a deliverance from the *penalties* of wrongdoing, either here or hereafter, except as these penalties may be modified by the new spiritual life. It is deliverance from the power of sin, rather than from its punishment. It is living in a present heaven of love and duty, rather than escaping into a place of safety hereafter.

Salvation, in the highest sense, is the development and final perfecting of *character*. — Right character is not a mere "condition" of future salvation. It is *itself salvation* here and now. (Phil. ii., 12; Heb. ii., 10.)

Jesus becomes our Saviour, not by having suffered the penalties of our sins in our stead, but by awakening in us a new spiritual life. (Matt. i., 21; John x., 10; Acts iii., 26; Rom. vi., 4, 11, 23; viii., 2; xi., 26, 27; Col. ii., 13.)

"The Kingdom of God" or "of Heaven" is the Reign of God *here and now*, as well as hereafter; the divine or heavenly state of things in human society and in the individual life. (Matt. iii., 2; x., 7; Luke xvii., 20, 21; Rom. xiv., 17; Rev. xii., 10.)

(9) In the CHRISTIANITY of Christ, as a spirit and life rather than as a system of speculative doctrine.

Christianity is better expressed in *character* than in creed. — The important question is not so much What do we think about Christ? as, How much of his spirit have we? (Matt. xii., 32; Rom. viii., 9; 1 Cor. xii., 12, 13.) — The true Confession of Christ is made in life, not in profession. (Matt. vii., 21; 1 Cor. iv., 20.) — The real Denial of Christ is faithlessness to his spirit and life. (2 Peter i., 1; compare 12-21.)

Infidelity, or Unbelief as a sin, is not disbelief in doctrine, but faithlessness to the Christly spirit and life. (2 Cor. vi., 14, 15, compare vii., 1; Luke xii., 46, compare "hypocrites" in Matt. xxiv., 51; Rev. xxi., 8; Phil. iii., 18, 19.)

Right beliefs are important in various degrees; but Belief (Luke i., 1,) is an involuntary mental act, in which we are not responsible for anything but sincerity and diligence in seeking the truth; Faith is a *voluntary moral act and state*, and is therefore a duty. (See definition of Faith, page 2.) (Matt. vi., 30; Acts vi., 5; Rom. iv., 12; 1 Cor. xiii., 13; Eph. iv., 13; vi., 1; 1 Tim. v., 8; vi., 12. For the use of "believe" in the sense of "have faith," see Mark v., 36; Rom. iv., 3.)

Religion is loyalty to God, manifested in reverence for truth and goodness and in righteousness of life.

That the religious spirit and life are more important than any forms, is the doctrine of Spiritual Religion. (John iv., 23; Rom. xiv., 5-18; Gal. v., 1, 2, 6; Col. ii., 16.) But forms are helpful and important. — The true Church of Christ consists of all who are trying to be Christ-like. (Rom. xiv., 17, 18; Eph. vi., 24.)

(10) In **INSPIRATION**, as universal, a Divine illumination in all souls, and an impulse and guidance toward truth and goodness.

Inspiration is needed in every soul to interpret and verify the teachings of those who are inspired in a higher degree. (See 11.) — According to its degree inspiration confers authority, but *not necessarily infallibility*.

The Bible is not all equally authoritative; some parts are not at all authoritative. (Matt. v., 38, 39, 43, 44) — “The word of God,” in the Scriptural use of the phrase, means *never the Bible as a whole, nor the mere letter of a text*. But any moral or spiritual truth, (Luke iv., 4; John x., 35,) especially Christian truth, (Luke viii., 11; Acts iv., 31; Eph. vi., 17,) or any Divine command, (Luke iii., 2,) or promise, (Rom. ix., 6,) whether found in Scripture or given elsewhere, (Mark vii., 13,) is in Scripture called God’s word.

(11) In the **FINAL AUTHORITY** of the testimony of God in our own Reason, Conscience and Soul.

This involves the right and duty of individual judgment, under a responsibility to God alone. (Rom. xiv., 4, 5) — It also forbids belief in any doctrine that is clearly seen to be *irrational, immoral or irreligious*. (Luke xii., 57; 1 Cor. ii., 15.)

The truth contained in Scripture must be verified by *our own moral and religious insight*, which is “the witness of the Spirit.” (Job xxxii., 8; Matt. xvi., 17; 1 Cor. ii., 10, 12, 15; 2 Cor. iv., 6.)

The Bible exhibits the main *historical sources* of Christian beliefs; but the *final reason* for holding these beliefs must be found in the approval of them by our own moral and spiritual nature as awakened and enlightened by Faith (John vii., 17) and guided by the Spirit of God. (John xvi., 13.)

(12) In **IMMORTALITY**, as the Future Life of Divine discipline and endless progress.

There is no reason to suppose that death either causes the remission of penalties, or shuts out opportunities of repentance. The mercy of God is everlasting to all. (Ps. cxlv., 8, 9; Micah vii., 18; Luke vi., 35, 36.) — Unitarians generally believe in the final reconciliation and salvation of all souls. (Eph. i., 10; Phil. ii., 10, 11; Col. i., 20.) A few believe in a final extinction of life in the incorrigible. None believe in the endless suffering of any soul.

NOTE. This Statement of Belief was unanimously adopted by the N. H. Unitarian Association, at Concord, Oct. 30, 1878,—not as a creed in the sense of a limit of inquiry or a test of fellowship,—but as an affirmation of the *most distinctive* views that are now generally held by Unitarians.

Sent gratuitously on application to the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

THE
KINGDOM OF GOD.

BY
REV. E. E. HALE.



BOSTON:
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

OUR FAITH.

*The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.*

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test ; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand. — MATT. iv. 17.

THAT is the reason why they are to repent :—Repent **ye**, for the kingdom of God is at hand. The reason is forgotten by many of our modern exhorters. But it was distinct when the Saviour spoke and when his apostles spoke. Yes! and when they prayed, as he taught them to pray, their first prayer was for this “kingdom of God,” “Thy kingdom come.”

What he taught them, and what they believed, was that a real kingdom of God was to come in this world that they lived in. And when the Christian church, in any of its simpler or more intelligent moments, falls back on the foundation truths, this is what it teaches now: that God can reign in this world, and that he is to reign here. It does not so much discuss the origin of evil, as proclaim the overthrow of evil. All things bad, mean, cruel, painful, distressing, unjust, unclean, untrue, shall cease to be. God shall reign. God’s kingdom shall come. Just as, in the heavens above, planets move as his law directs,—comets come and go, suns and worlds revolve, in precise obedience,—so the time shall come that in this world, which we choose to call the world of man, every thing shall obey his purpose. Why not? Man is his child, and like him. Man and man’s doings, the earth in all its methods, shall obey God. God’s kingdom shall come.

And this is the one appeal for repentance which the Christian revivalist makes "Repent ye, because this kingdom of God is at hand."

It seems to me that this is a proper subject of address in the opening of a Conference of Liberal Christians, because the very words of the text explain just what the Liberal Church is for. It exists in the hope of bringing in this kingdom of God. We here, so far as we are banded together in one body, are united that the kingdom of God may more quickly come. As an organization, as a separate church, the Liberal Church has no reason to be, and no right to be, excepting this wish and the determination which springs from it. Other communions, other churches, have other objects beside this object: but this is our only object. In the methods of other communions, the coming of the kingdom of God is a business of more or less comparative importance. With us it is the only business. It is of paramount and all-covering importance. It colors all our preaching, all our tracts, all our papers, all our talk, all our every thing. Because paramount, it engages our attention as a specific and absolute reality in the business of such a Conference as assembles here.

Here were these apostles sent out, you would say, almost with no preparation, to proclaim glad tidings. What are their glad tidings? What is this gospel? The glad tidings are in this very announcement, that God is to reign now, in this world: that the kingdom of God is at hand. Paul goes up and down through all the coasts of Judea, through Asia Minor and Greece, proclaiming glad tidings; that he had something good to tell. What was this something good? It was, that the kingdom of God was at hand. He and they, in their eagerness, thought that this perfect reign of God would come sooner than the hard fact has proved. It has taken a little longer

than they thought, to overrule and to turn backward all the courses of evil. But I do not think it any such misfortune, that a preacher of good tidings should be sanguine in that direction. Better put God's kingdom a little too early, than put it off indefinitely far. A pity that later times of the church have freed themselves so placidly of that eager certainty. A pity that any age should settle down into the feeling that God's kingdom is coming, — yes, is always coming, and never close at hand; as if it were coming as to-morrow is always coming, which never comes: coming in a certain *Pickwickian* sense, but in no matter-of-fact sense, such as belongs to the affairs of men. Now, Paul and the rest preached that it was coming, as a man might tell you that next Christmas is coming, or that the foreign mail is coming. There would come running up into the square of some Greek town, an eager messenger to call the men lounging there. "Come here; here is a man proclaiming good news, glad tidings." "Good news! What is this good news? Come along, Marcus, come along, Stephanas, let's come and hear his good news." What did they hear when they came there? They heard that God himself was going to reign, and that right soon. Men who came from homes where their children were sick and in agony from pain, heard that God was to reign, that pain was to be done away, and health to be the law. Slaves who were certain of nothing but stripes, and men who lived by bitter alms, heard that God was to reign; every child of God was to have his own home and be protected in it. Men who yearned to know more than they knew, to understand something of the marvels around them, were told that God was to reign; and every child of God be helped by every other child, in the best training, in the best education, to learn all that man could learn, and know all that man could know. Yes, and this weeping mother, and her silent husband there, as they stop

to hear the preacher, while they are carrying to its resting-place the little urn which contains all that is left of the body of their child, they stop to ask about the glad tidings,—to be told that God reigns; that there is no death; that this is only an outside shell which has fallen off; that the dear girl is immortal. It was clear enough to those people, in those days of eager preaching, what the good tidings were.

But what would be the experience of Marcus or of Stephanas to-day, in one of our large towns, if a messenger came running to call them to some new-comer preaching “glad tidings,” which had not been heard before. Suppose they found the preacher and listened. If he were one of my Episcopalian friends, his first statement would be, in substance, —

“Dear friends, you will be rejoiced to know that I have brought some books with me, which that great and good man, King Henry VIII., prepared for you three hundred years ago, in which are written down your prayers for you; and you will all be delighted to know that regular worship will be conducted according to the forms in these books, at such and such a place, at such and such a time.”

Or, if the preacher were a Roman Catholic priest, his good tidings would be, that they should not longer be worried about their opinions or the selection of their duties, nor to decide between right and wrong. They would be glad to know that the Bishop of Rome had appointed another bishop, who had appointed a priest, who would be ready to tell them what to believe and what to disbelieve, what to do and what not to do, what to read and what not to read, how to vote, how to pray, and in general to direct life for them.

Or if the preacher were one of our Baptist or Methodist

friends, the probability is, that he would instruct Marcus or Stephanas how to save his own soul, how to secure his own heaven. And if Marcus stopped in the instruction to ask, "How about that riff-raff of rascals down at Hell Corner yonder, or Sodom?" there is danger that he would be told, "Now you disturb this meeting. My business is with you; I am to teach you how to face 'the wrath of the Lamb.'" I am told that there are no Calvinists now; and I hope that that is true. If there were a Calvinist preacher, and Marcus or Stephanas ran to hear him, his good tidings would be: "Dear friends, save yourselves if you can, by faith in Jesus; for the good tidings are, that most of you are predestined to be damned."

Mark me, I am not so unjust, nor such a fool, as to say, in either case, that this is the only gospel these men have to preach; but I say that, as things are, and as a preacher of either of these communions feels called upon to begin the announcement of his mission, here is his first gospel; such is his paramount doctrine; it takes precedence in his thought and in his preaching. He comes before a new community with such an announcement that a novice in that community would suppose that he had something else to proclaim than "the kingdom of God is at hand." Now, in the preaching of Jesus Christ, and in the charge he gave to his apostles, the paramount thing said at the beginning is "The kingdom of God is at hand." This is the glad tidings. To this, all things else in the appeal are secondary. Repentance even is conditioned on this truth. But, in the modern preaching of the sects, the kingdom of God is made secondary. In the spirited and sincere work of our friend Mr. Moody, the first appeal — and, so far as I see, the characteristic appeal — is to the individual man to save his own little separate soul; to turn him back to the poor selfishness of worrying about that. I think you have all observed, that, when in the true Christian

spirit, Mr. Moody gave himself up to the Christian work of averting intemperance, for instance, in any community, men stopped and looked at that, as if it were an exception in his regular business, — as if he had turned aside from his regular path. But the truth was, that here he was in the distinct line of Christian apostleship and Christian appeals, to which all else is exceptional or secondary. Preach to men to “repent;” yes, but for what reason? Why, because the kingdom of God is at hand!

Now let us come down a single step in history. Let us compare this early preaching with what has come out of it. Let us try the tree by its fruits. These men said the kingdom of God was coming. Was it coming? Were they right, or were they wrong? Does God reign to-day in any realm where the devil seemed to reign then?

When they said God was to reign, some mocked, and others went off to their old lives, saying, “We will hear thee again of this matter.” That is much the way in which most people take preaching now. People thought it was a fashion of exaggeration, as they talk now about the rhetoric of the pulpit. It was an Oriental phrase; or it was a fancy of a fanatic. The preachers did not, indeed, go into much detail. They were satisfied to say in general that God was to reign. And they were received in that indifferent way. Would things have been better had they spoken in detail? Would more credit have been given to them?

Suppose that some Agabus, with the spirit of prophecy, had said, “I will speak in detail. The Master did great things. But he said to those who came after him, ‘Greater things than these shall ye do.’ Do you not know what he means? I will tell you a little part of what he means. He means that the diseases shall be trampled

out, of which you and your children are dying. And I tell you that this leprosy you are talking of shall be unknown among Christian men, but as a curiosity in a museum. I tell you that the plague and the black-death shall cease, and be studied among the doubtful matters of history. I tell you that the average life of man shall be three times what it is to-day. I tell you that God shall forbid pain in surgery: that the curse of Eve shall be undone; and women shall bring their children into life without agony; that beneath the surgeon's knife the patient shall sleep serene. I tell you that, in the same way, God means that the word 'slavery' shall be a word without meaning in this world; that every child born into this world shall have every right and privilege which the strongest prince or richest lord can claim for his children. I tell you that God's reign will bring about the end of war and arms. Why, there shall be nations to whose extent your Roman empire is but as a province; whose people, generation after generation, shall never see a soldier in battle array. I tell you that God means to put an end to starvation and want: he means that there shall be nations of men who need not know what the word 'hunger' means. I tell you that God is to reign in such nations in happy homes, in which, from infancy to manhood, no child ever feels a blow; in which the peasant who drives the plough is as sure of all that makes life blessed and happy as the sovereign upon his throne. I tell you that in such lands men shall pay their tributes as their own proud gift to the government they love and are; shall insist on paying them, as kings insist on making gifts to each other, worthy of their thrones. I tell you that, under God's kingdom, there shall be nations which know no limit but the very ocean; which shall agree to live united and not in discord; as the Master says, 'They all shall be one.' They shall agree to lay their divided

opinions before one master tribunal. They shall maintain no separate armies; one only for the united empire, to give this tribunal power. There shall be no barbarian; no bondsman; no stranger. From ocean to ocean, every man, because he is man, shall have every privilege, whatever his language, his color, or his worship. Yes! and Jesus Christ shall so reign over the world,—in laws which grow from his laws, in governments founded on his word,—that, literally, from north to south, from east to west, farther than the Pillars of Hercules; farther than those people of the east, who are clad in silk, and send us spice and sugar: there shall be no island so separate, and no desert so parted, but that men shall know the paramount power of the nations which are called, however unworthily, by his name.”

If any prophet had said that, in Ptolemais, or Ephesus, or Corinth, or Athens, your practical Roman, your cultivated Greek, however eager for what is new, would have left his seat before the man was done his raving, he would have turned from such a babbler in scorn: he would not even have said he would hear him again. Yet a thousand times more than this—as you know—is already true. It is true, because Jesus Christ sent those men on that errand. It is true, because they stuck to their errand, and sought nothing else. They made it their paramount business to proclaim the glad tidings; and the glad tidings are, the reign of God in the world of God’s children!

The same work is the work of Christendom to-day, in this critical moment of the fortunes of the world. This is what the Liberal Church of to-day, what the Liberal communions stand for, glad tidings, and not sad tidings. Glad tidings; the absolute and real coming of the kingdom of God. This is their paramount office. It is in practice, in our communities, what “differences” them from other communions.

That is to say, the first work of a liberal church, in any region, is to bring that region up to the standard of the kingdom of God. And a liberal church has no right to be, there is no sort of use in establishing it, unless in the very "hard-pan" of its foundations, there is the determination of those who found it, that it shall "level up" the place in which it is, and bring it nearer to that standard of the kingdom of God.

Simply stated, if what you want is elegant ritual, you had better go to the Episcopalians, and be done with it.

If what you want is an old statement of duty, authorized by the traditions of many centuries, you had better go to the Greek church, from which, when it was old, the first of schismatics, the Roman church, broke away. Go there, and be done with it.

If your eagerness to save your separate little souls be any mere selfish—and, therefore, petty—eagerness for your individual comfort in the infinite future, go to Brother Moody; and be done with it.

If you want to live in a close ecclesiastical coterie,—to buy your groceries from one of "our people," to have your child taught her letters by one of "our people," to go and drink tea with a party all of "our people," go to our Baptist friends; and be done with it.

But, if you want to work, first and foremost for the reign of God in the hearts of men, and in the world's affairs, come into the Liberal Church, and you shall never be done with it!

To form a new church in any community is a great thing, but not a difficult thing; for, when two people come together in a Saviour's name,—though it is better when three come,—there is a church there, for all purposes, He is in the midst of them. Now it may be granted, that, in planting such a seed, the first necessity is, that it throw

out roots. You must not look for stem, leaves, or flowers first. Roots first, and these afterwards. Still, for heaven's sake, let nobody forget that leaves and flowers, and eventually fruit, are what the seed is planted for. If a church only roots itself, it might as well not be. The coming of the kingdom of God is the object, and the only object, for which this church is founded. Not simply the proclaiming or prophesying the coming, but absolutely the bringing it in. It is to hew down the mountains and to fill up the valleys; that is what the church is founded for. He that prepares the way of the Lord is greater than he who only prophesies it. And so, even when a new-born church is forming itself, while it is throwing down its roots and getting strength, every genuine man and woman in it, who is in earnest about it, ought to be asking, "What can we do to bring God's rule into this town?" "Whose fault was it, for instance, that those children died of *cholera infantum* last night in Swett Street?" "What could have been done to prevent that drunken fight at the corner grocery?" "Could we have done nothing to rescue that poor factory-girl who committed suicide yesterday?" What could we do, what could this church do, in such instances as this, where the devil seems to have succeeded, so that in his place the God of Love might reign?

To say the truth, the languor, not to say the failure, of our decorous, but somewhat slow system of church administration, comes in, in proportion as we forget or neglect this original object of all church organization. People say of the Unitarian church that it wants enthusiasm, — that it must hunt up some object for its attacks, to awaken the enthusiasm of its young men and maidens. Object enough, if it will only hold to the original object, and bring in the kingdom of God! The failure comes where this object is kept out of sight, by some miserable piece of fussy method which, for the moment, takes the

place of it. A young man, startled and glad to be startled, by finding out that he also is God's child, and has God's work to do in the world, comes to you in the joy of that discovery, and offers his maiden service in the great army. And you give him his post, — by telling him you would like to have him sell tickets among his friends for a strawberry party, which is to provide the means for carpeting the pulpit stairs. When you treat your first recruit so, you have no reason to wonder that the second recruit is long in coming. Let the recruits see that you have an object no less than God himself has! Let them see that the object of your church, first, second, and last, is no less than to bring nearer the reign of God in that town.

And this also is to be said in no rhetorical, nor yet in Scriptural language. It is to be said in detail. What you want is the enlargement and the victory of Moral Power. For instance: I know a village in the Green Mountains — I dare say you do — where the separate selfishness of men has been so tamed, where the powers that rule are so wise and so strong, that the whole village is one beautiful park, — really more lovely, more picturesque, more attractive, than, with all his wealth, the richest nobleman in England can create around his home. To make beauty like that in the surroundings of home, is the worthy object of the Christianity of a town. And it is quite within the power of the Christian men and women of any village in New England to achieve a victory like that, when they so determine.

I know, and you know, communities where the management of public amusements is not left to the accidental drift of wandering showmen, — but where the best and most highly cultivated people in the town take the personal oversight and preparation of them. I could name a town where every adult, man and woman, except the very

aged, was a member of the well-organized club or society which provided for all that town the fine music, the bright plays, the lectures, and other entertainments for its winter. Now it is in the power of the Christian men and women of any village in New England to achieve a victory like that, when they so determine.

I know a town, and many of you know it, where manners are so pure, and life so simple, that when, once a month, its elegant town-hall was filled for a really social party, the committee carried their invitations to every cabin, as to every palace, in the place,—and it has its palaces as it has its cabins. Now it is in the power of the Christian men and women of any village in New England, so to maintain cordial friendship among neighbors, and so to train in decency the growing children, as to achieve a Christian victory like that, when they so determine.

I know a town, and you know it, where a laboring man, whose daily duty takes him to the hardest toil, at the end of eight hours of such work, or ten, goes to the room which the public provides for him, to find waiting at his table, in his work-room, the costly mathematical treatises which the public has bought for him, to carry forward there the studies which you and I cannot begin to appreciate, because we cannot begin to comprehend them, and to conduct his correspondence on such themes with the most distinguished mathematicians in the land. Now it is in the power of the Christian men and women in any town to give such direction to its public arrangements that such a victory as that shall be possible, whenever they so determine.

I know a town where the watchfulness over every child born into it is so absolute, that literally not one child escapes the luxury of an education. The officials watch for each child of God as for hidden treasure indeed.

And literally every child who breathes God's air is sure at least of intellectual culture, such as in other lands prophets and saints have longed for, and have waited for, and have died without the sight. Now it is quite within the power of the Christian men and women of any town so to arrange its methods of public education as to achieve that victory, when they so determine.

I know a town where the simple health regulations are so well enforced that the average age of man, if the experience of many recent years is to be taken, is sixty-seven years, — well nigh the mark of three score and ten indicated by Moses nearly forty centuries ago. So many tears which have never flowed! so many little graves which were never opened and never closed! Now it is quite in the power of the Christian men and women of any town in New England to enforce God's reign and law in the mere matter of health so as to achieve such a triumph as that, when they so determine.

I know a town — more than one town, thank God, and so do you — where the Christianity of the place has so triumphed over man's greed and man's lust, that for years on years no open bar for the sale of liquor has existed there. For a generation the boys and young men there have grown up, not tempted by that wretched delusion which most quickly steals away life and manhood. Now it is quite within the power of the Christian men and women of any New England town to achieve that victory in its borders, when they so determine.

I know a county in New England, as so do you, where no person is imprisoned in the House of Correction. Its neat, whitewashed cells are empty, thank God. The plates and cups and saucers in its pantry are never taken from the shelves. The useless bolts rust in their rusting staples. The master and mistress of the jail fill up life by taking summer boarders in the house assigned to them.

Now it is in the power of the Christian men and women to achieve a triumph akin to that in every county, when the religious and moral forces combine to their work of certain victory, — that is to say, when they so determine.

More than this, and better than this, I know, thank God, many households of Christian training, where little children grow up glad and happy, because they know they are God's children, — where they never feared a blow, — where they never shrunk under anger, — where life has been as beautiful and as glad to them as Heaven. I have seen such children come with their parents every morning to sing their hymn of thanks, as simply as the birds sing theirs. I have found them looking forward on life, as bravely and as certainly as the morning sun looks forward to his daily course of blessing. Now it is in the power of the Christian men and women of any place so to bring up their own households, so to show their neighbors what Religion is, — that "Love is the Whole," — as to achieve everywhere a victory as great as that, when they so determine.

And, not to go farther, I know, and you know, communities where the love of God and the love of Man have so far exerted themselves already, that, from "native impulse, elemental force," the best men drift into the places of command. It is of course that their governors are modest, honest, brave, and true. It is in the power of the Christian men and women of any community in New England to bring about a victory as great as that, when they so determine.

Talk of lack of enthusiasm! Say that the Church wants a visible object! Try this visible object, — the visible kingdom of a present God! When your young man wakes up to find that he also is a son of God, and

comes to your church, to ask where he is to stand, and what he is to do, make this answer first of all, —

“To begin with, we have to see that this village is as healthy as those happy hamlets on the Cordilleras ;

“We mean to have it as lovely as the villages on Lake Como ;

“We mean to have its morals and manners as pure as if it were the home of Oberlin ;

“For children born apt for art, there shall be advantages as genuine, though they be not as large, as at Milan or Florence ;

“For whatever other range of learning, our schools and libraries shall be such as Horace Mann and Robert Owen never dreamed of ;

“For the search after truth, we mean that these people shall be as eager as the noble Jews of Berea ;

“Life shall be simple here as if we lived in the islands of the blessed ;

“And we believe there will come to us a happiness, because we do not seek it, — such as men sought for and did not find among the Lotus-eaters and in Sybaris.”

Once offer a programme like that, for the duty of a staff-officer in bringing in the Reign of God, and your young women of life, and your young men of courage, will hear you gladly, — will enlist, and put their shoulders to the wheel.

And these are only so many little illustrations of a beginning. I have not pretended to describe the Kingdom of God. I have only tried to name some of the first steps to be taken in the preparation. To make that preparation is the duty of the Church. As the kingdom comes, it will describe itself. For us to make the highway ready, that He may reign whose right it is to reign !

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THE
UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

By CHARLES A. ALLEN.

"From scheme and creed the light goes out,
The saintly fact survives ;
The blessed Master none can doubt,
Revealed in holy lives."



BOSTON :
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OUR FAITH.

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.*

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

•

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test ; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

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THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

"One hope, one faith, one love, restore
The seamless robe that Jesus wore."

IT is nearly eight hundred years since the nations of Christian Europe in a sudden outburst of religious enthusiasm became for the first time conscious of their brotherhood. For centuries these tribes had been like a pack of hungry wolves, falling upon one another to kill and devour. The robber barons were incessantly at war: each little castle on its lonely hill-top was a den of thieves. Deadly hatreds were handed down from father to son; the nearest neighbors watched year by year for opportunities of mutual slaughter. Even the Church, with its awful authority, overshadowing this world with the presence of a Supernatural World and the terrors of everlasting doom, was almost powerless to pacify the long and frightful anarchy. The unity of the Church, which was taught in mystic sacrament and creed and symbol, proclaiming that all Christians were brothers because they had One God and One Saviour, seemed a hopeless dream.

Suddenly the picture changed. The voice of Peter the Hermit rang through Europe, calling upon the faithful sons of the Church to arm themselves for the rescue of the sepulchre of Christ. He breathed the fire of his own zeal into the hearts of multitudes. Nobles sold their lands, and kings mortgaged their crowns, that they might spend their last treasures in the holy cause of the Cross. Old hatreds melted away in the furnace heat of this new enthusiasm. Deadly foes became devoted brothers. Hostile nations that had never met before but for strife, and could not even understand one another's language, now marched under the same banner and felt the inspiration of the same purpose. By hundreds of thousands they poured over Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean waters, upon the plains of Syria. The

Turkish armies were driven back; the Holy Sepulchre was rescued; and Christendom felt that surely the Millennium was at hand, that Christ would soon descend from the skies to rule over His own. But at last the tide turned. The Turks swept over Syria, and crossed into Europe; they encamped around the city of Constantine, and at one time threatened the subjugation of Christendom. Only the valor of the Polish and Hungarian people saved Western Europe.

Thus the great Crusades were a failure in what they directly aimed at. But *indirectly* they brought to Europe this great blessing, of making these discordant nations for the first time know that they were brothers. And this was realized, *not by their reciting the same creed*, which indeed they had often done for centuries, *but by their sharing a religious enthusiasm for the same great object.*

The lesson, however, was but half learned. Fresh quarrels arose. The Turks were still threatening Western Europe, when the Roman Church divided on questions of creed. A hundred sects hurled at one another their anathemas. Bloody strifes and frightful persecutions followed. The test that the Master gave, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," sounded now like an awful condemnation. Instead of the "unity of the Spirit" into which Christendom had suddenly awakened in the grand enthusiasm of the Crusades, there were now the fearful agonies of the so-called religious wars.

But a better age was already dawning. Among the Hungarian people who were saving Christendom from the Turks there was taught the doctrine that, not creed belief, but the love to God and man on which, the Master said, "hang all the law and the prophets," is the true ground of Christian fellowship, and that, *not the head, but the heart*, brings Christians together. Hence these believers in the "unity of the Spirit" (Eph. i. 4) called themselves "Unitarians," and were the first to bear the name, in the great epoch of the Reformation.¹

¹ The name "Unitarians" originally meant *union-men*, or those who believe in the largest Christian co-operation, and would fellowship all who

And this, rather than any doctrine about God or Christ, is what Unitarianism has really stood for. This is the doctrine which Channing preached in this country, and for which our churches have borne their witness since. This is why we take the name of "Liberal Christians." And as fast as the other Christian Churches have been brought closer together by the great enthusiasms of philanthropy that have made illustrious the present century, they also have learned in some degree the meaning of "the unity of the Spirit," and by these lessons of Christian brotherhood are more clearly understanding the meaning of Christianity itself.

For it is only in the enthusiasms of *humanity* that men learn the noblest *religious* spirit. A sense of human brotherhood must always precede a belief in a Divine fatherhood. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen," says the Apostle, "how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" and, we might add, how can he believe in the love of God for him and for all his fellow men? See how, in times of wide-spread distress, when whole nations are moved with pity, all the divisions that a narrow religion has made melt away, and men worship

"profess and call themselves Christians," without regard to differences of creed and rite, if only the spirit and life be Christian. It was a protest against all sectarianism, the evil spirit of creed conceit and arrogance, which has been the chief sin and curse of the Christian Church since the Apostolic Age. It was a prophecy of the generous spirit that is now bringing all branches of the Church nearer together in the unity of the Spirit.

The proof of this is to be found in Rees's "Translation of the Racovian Catechism" (London, 1818), of which there is a copy in the Cambridge Divinity School Library. On pp. xlii and xliiv, Rees, in a foot-note, quotes Peter Bod's history of the dispute before the Synod at Weissenburg in Hungary, 1568, as relating (p. 45) that at the Diet of Thorde in 1557 an edict was passed securing to persons of all denominations the free exercise of their religion, and on account of this *union* all the Reformed Churches were called *Uniti* or *Unitarii*. But, when a few years later the more conservative party in these Churches fell away from this union and formed sects, the more liberal party, who still believed in a generous fellowship, retained the name of *Unitarii*.

It is a curious fact that the word Unitarian does not occur in Johnson's Dictionary, of which the last edition in the author's lifetime is dated 1773.

It would be well if the Unitarians of to-day would all insist upon restoring the primitive meaning of their denominational name.

together who before had seemed to believe in different Gods ; they now only know that it is *fellow men* who are suffering, not Catholic or Protestant, Hebrew or Christian ; and they learn to say, with the ancient prophet, “ Have we not all one Father ? Hath not one God created us ? ”

It is in these great enthusiasms of philanthropy and religion that this unity of the Spirit is clearly manifested, — not at all in the acceptance of creeds. It is inevitable that honest men should *think differently*; and, when they undertake to *reason* together, a confusion falls on them like that of Babel. They speak different tongues, and every one thinks his neighbor’s language nonsense. The great calamities that have fallen upon the Church have all been caused by the mistake of trying to enforce a uniformity of creed, instead of being content with that unity of the Spirit that bound together the first disciples in their reverent *loyalty* to the common Master, their filial *trust* in the Heavenly Father, and their fraternal *love* toward fellow men, which is the true Christian trinity, — but it is one which the heart alone, and not the head, can apprehend, — and in these three divine enthusiasms there is always unity.

It is this practical loyalty *to* Christ, not any creed belief *about* him, that the New Testament means by “faith” and “believing in Christ” ; for the Master himself blessed those who, by clothing the naked and feeding the hungry, had proved themselves loyal to his spirit and work, though they had never even so much as heard of him, much less could have had any definite belief about him. Yet they must have had true “faith” ; they must have really “believed in Christ” ; — otherwise he would never have blessed them as he did, when at the very same time he dismissed as “cursed” those who, though they had been accustomed to “profess” their faith in Christ (Matt. vii. 22, 23), had been lacking in this Christlike spirit of humanity (Matt. xxv. 34-46). It is the Christlike spirit and life, not any profession or creed belief, that Jesus will accept as true “belief” in him. It is not doctrinal truth, but practical truth, that he asks.

We may, therefore, be sure that in these great sentiments,

rather than in any theological dogmas, we can find the *higher life*, which *religion* is. What separates must be human; what unites must be divine, *the life of the Spirit*. When we are quarrelling about theology, and even when we are merely interested in theological inquiry, we are not "in the Spirit."

Theology is not religion, but is something lower. Theology inevitably speaks many tongues, while religion has but one language, the common language of love, and loyalty, and trust, which is the voice of the Spirit.

How strange that the Christian Church has so seldom taken to heart the divine lesson of the Day of Pentecost! Many and mutually unintelligible were the tongues that the disciples spoke to the multitude, but it was One Spirit that spoke through them all. And "every man heard them speak in his own language," — this Parthian heard the Gospel preached to *him* by some one of the disciples in the Parthian tongue, and that Phrygian in the Phrygian tongue. Thus Christian truth was taught to every man in the homely speech with which he was most familiar, and which would make that truth to him most vivid and clear.

And so we may rightly regard the various theologies and creeds of Christendom as so many *Pentecostal tongues* by which the Spirit has met the needs of different minds. While we listen to the mere tongues, we hear only hopeless discord; but when we open our hearts to the tide of the Spirit, and deeply feel the warm glow of religious life that pours through these various channels, we comprehend that their real *meaning* is the same, and thus we share in the *unity* of the Spirit.

But at the heart of every great enthusiasm that draws men warmly together, there must be some *idea* which finds expression in different creeds and gives to them their spiritual life. The *minds* of men may not be able to see it alike, or their tongues to describe it alike; but their *hearts* will feel its power alike, and be drawn by it into the unity of the Spirit. No better illustration of this truth can be found than in the "idea" that underlies the Catholic worship of Mary, the Protestant worship of Jesus, and the primitive Christian worship of the Heavenly Father alone.

For, if we compare Christianity with all the other great historic religions, we find that it taught the world a unique thought about God, and in consequence awakened in the hearts of men a new and higher religious life. Buddhism, the great religion of Eastern Asia, (which was at one time accepted by a third of mankind,) while it taught a noble morality and philanthropy, yet believed in no God but an unconscious Fate. Brahmanism worshipped a deity without character or love, the vague "Being" of Pantheism. Mohammedanism adored a righteous God, but only with fear and submission. Even Judaism was, as the Apostle said, "a spirit of bondage" to fear. But Christianity proclaimed that "God is Love," and taught men that they could *all* trust a Heavenly Father who was full of human sympathy and mercy. This is the essence of the Gospel, the glad tidings that Jesus brought. This it was that opened all the fountains of a deep and tender religious life, of faith, and hope, and love, and joy, as no other religion has been able to do. And in this belief about God, *though expressed in different theological languages*, all Christians find themselves brought together with the same religious emotions in the unity of the Spirit.

But it has necessarily found expression in various tongues adapted to various needs. Early in Christian history the name of Jesus himself was taken as the most vivid and touching *symbol* of the Divine Love which had shone so sweetly and persuasively through His life; and *His* name was worshipped as the tenderest and *most human* name for God, which made most real and vivid to human hearts the *Christlikeness* of the Awful Mystery in which we live and have our being. *That* name had marvellous power to kindle faith and love, when other names would fail. And to many Christians to-day it is the only name for the Infinite One that adequately utters the Christian belief.

But in other ages, when Christ was thought of only as the terrible Judge, it was only by the worship of a divine *womanhood* in the Virgin Mary that the Christian Gospel could be still transmitted, and the Christian life of trust and love be saved from utter extinction. And by multitudes of true Christians to-day the divineness of Mary is held as an essential doctrine of Christianity, because they cannot see how the vital truth of

Christianity can be expressed and apprehended in any other way.

Thus in different minds the spiritual truth of Christianity must necessarily be apprehended in different ways, and be stated in different doctrinal forms, as water poured into different vessels takes the different shapes of the vessels that receive it, — a lesson that one of our own poets has beautifully taught in a legend about Ambrose, who was Bishop of Milan, 400 A. D., and a famous theologian : —

Never surely was holier man
Than Ambrose, since the world began.
Through earnest prayer and watchings long
He sought to know 'twixt right and wrong ;
Much wrestling with the Blessed Word
To make it yield the sense of the Lord,
That he might build a storm-proof creed
To fold the flock in at their need.
At last he builded a perfect faith,
All fenced about with "The Lord thus saith."
To *himself* he fitted the doorway's size,
Meted the light to the need of his eyes,
And knew, by a sure and inward sign,
That the work of his fingers was divine.
Then Ambrose said, "All those shall die
The eternal death who believe not as I."
And some were boiled, some burned in fire,
Some sawn in twain, that his heart's desire,
For the good of men's souls, might be satisfied,
By the drawing of all to the righteous side.

One day, as Ambrose was seeking the truth
In his lonely walk, he saw a youth
Resting himself in the shade of a tree.
It had never been given him to see
So shining a face, and the good man thought
'T were pity he should not believe as he ought ;
So he set himself by the young man's side,
And the "state of his soul" with questions tried.

But the heart of the stranger was hardened indeed,
Nor received the stamp of the one true creed ;
And the spirit of Ambrose waxed sore to find
Such face the porch of so narrow a mind.

Now there bubbled beside them where they stood
A fountain of waters, sweet and good.
The youth to the streamlet's brink drew near,
Saying, " Ambrose, thou maker of creeds, look here ! "
Six vases of crystal then he took,
And set them along the edge of the brook.
" As into these vessels the water I pour,
There shall one hold less, the other more,
And the water unchanged, in every case,
Shall put on the figure of the vase. |
O thou, who wouldst unity make through strife,
Canst thou fit this sign to the Water of Life ? "

When Ambrose looked up he stood alone ;
The youth and the stream and the vases were gone ;
But he knew, by a sense of humbled grace,
He had talked with an angel face to face,
And he felt his heart change inwardly,
As he fell on his knees beside the tree.

SIX UNITIES.

WE BELIEVE IN

1. THE *unity of the Spirit*, or the harmony that unites all true Christians and grows out of moral and spiritual sympathy in the spirit of filial obedience and trust toward God, of reverence for Jesus, and of brotherly love to man; for it is impossible to unite all true Christians by means of creeds or forms, and therefore we would offer Christian fellowship to all, whatever be their belief or their worship, who manifest this Christian spirit, which is the only test of Christian discipleship.

2. The *unity of mankind*, since "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. xiv. 17); we are all children of *one family*, cared for by the same Heavenly Father, scholars in *the same Divine school*, here and hereafter, teaching and learning from one another, sharing in the consequences of all wrong-doing, and in duty bound to help and to save one another; and therefore no man can be fully blessed, while any soul whom he can help is suffering, and all true saints are consecrated here and hereafter to labor and self-sacrifice till *all souls* are reconciled.

3. The *unity of all truth*, whether revealed in nature, in history, in Scripture, in eminent saints, or in our own souls; and therefore we believe that what we clearly see to be true in our own *higher life* must be given us by *the same Spirit* that has given truth through other channels, and that, after error and misunderstanding have been sifted out, we shall find a perfect harmony between all other truth and that which **the** Spirit witnesses to us directly.

4. The *unity of love*, working from everlasting to everlasting for the highest good of all souls, without favoritism, caprice, or change, alike in the seen and the unseen worlds, and controlling all evil and malignity for ultimate blessing to all.

5. The *unity of God's character*, regarding His love as in perfect harmony with His justice, both working together for the highest welfare of all souls.

6. The *unity of God's being*, which, however diversely manifested in the threefold revelations of creation, humanity, and providence, is yet always one Being, the everywhere-present Life, in whom all things exist, and whom we worship by the name that Jesus taught us, "Our Father in Heaven."

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WHAT DO UNITARIANS BELIEVE?

A STATEMENT OF FAITH.

BY

REV. CHARLES W. WENDTÉ

Together with Appendices

ON THE

UNITARIAN CHURCH AND THE UNITARIAN
FELLOWSHIP.



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

WHAT DO UNITARIANS BELIEVE?

IN the Book of Acts (xxviii. 22) we read that the Jews at Rome said to the apostle Paul, the prisoner of the Lord : " We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest : for as concerning this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against." This utterance is applicable to the Unitarians of the present day, for like the early Christians we find that everywhere we are "spoken against." Sometimes this gainsaying takes the form of a holy horror and bigoted opposition. Unitarians are held to be an unbelieving, unspiritual, and worldly people, but little better than infidels, and a great deal more dangerous to the Christian cause. This low opinion of our doctrines and motives often springs from wilful ignorance and blind prejudice. It would be a thankless task to attempt to change it by argument or disproof. The best course for us to pursue is to go our own way as uprightly and charitably as we can, and to trust that time and a better acquaintance will correct all such ungenerous and mistaken opinions about us.

There is, however, a large and an increasing number of persons, who, laying aside all prejudice and self-righteousness, come as simple seekers after truth and inquire of us, " We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest?" Such a question we are always ready to answer in the same spirit in which it is asked. For while the Unitarian lays no

stress on the formal profession of religious opinions, holding that life is more than thought, a pure character above a correct theology, yet there is nothing in this that precludes belief or negatives the holding of well-defined opinions on religious subjects. On the contrary, we believe that righteousness of life and perfection of character can best be attained through a lofty religious faith. We believe that faith must underlie all genuine effort; that a faithless life is a weak and worthless one, and that doctrines, as the affirmations and axioms of faith, are of great importance to the religious life of man.

UNITARIANS HAVE NO CREED.

We cannot, however, answer the question, "What thinkest thou?" by pointing to an authoritative and all-sufficient creed. For it is a distinctive feature of Unitarianism that it has no such creed. We can see no possible good, but much positive harm resulting from such stereotyped and professedly infallible formulas of belief. The history of the Christian Church will bear out the assertion that a creed hinders the development and efficacy of religious truth, and leads to mental sluggishness and insincerity on the part of those who subscribe to it; that it fosters ecclesiastical pride and power, and is the fruitful mother of uncharity, sectarianism, intolerance, and persecution. For these reasons, among others, we do not require allegiance to any such unprogressive standard of belief as a creed. We hold that it does not help but rather hinders the spiritual life, and instead of being the vehicle of religious faith often becomes its prison and its tomb. For faith is one thing, a creed is another. Faith is a state of the mind; a creed is a statement of the mind. The former is the spirit which giveth life, the latter is too often the letter which killeth. Now the first condition of all genuine faith

is absolute freedom to inquire, and to freely utter and alter its opinions. In thus exercising the right of private judgment the Unitarians have been the Protestants of the Protestants. Said Dr. Channing: "If I have found life an increasing good, if I have in any measure succeeded in enlarging my own mind, if I have risen to any generous views of the Christian religion or human nature, I owe this happiness, under God, chiefly to the intellectual freedom which I have enjoyed. This has been to me the breath of life, and I must vindicate it for others as well as for myself." This noble passage well expresses the working principle of the Unitarian body. Each one of us examines, thinks, believes, and speaks as he will in religious matters. For his belief and its utterance he is responsible only to his own soul and to God. Since great uncertainty must always attend the thinking of finite and fallible minds, we believe that God holds no one responsible for the actual attainment of Divine knowledge, but only for the serious search after it. As Channing has expressed it, we are responsible not for the *rightness*, but for the *uprightness*, of our personal opinions.

Again, we do not believe that a creed is necessary as a condition of denominational or church fellowship. It may be a convenience in building up a large sect, in simplifying the technical process called conversion, and in maintaining the authority of church and clergy. But we have no such aims. We put our faith in ideas and ideals rather than in ecclesiastical machinery. We labor for the development of religious truth and its application to the life of man. We care less to build up the outward church than to spread the gospel of light, liberty, and love. The church, the ministry, the stated worship are useful instrumentalities to this end, but only when they are rightly made subordinate to it. Too often, however, as we see by many sad examples in the Christian world to-day, the interests of a particular

church or sect are made paramount to the interests of religious enlightenment, progress, and reform. To avoid this evil the Unitarian maintains the greatest freedom and simplicity in his ecclesiastical relations. He refuses to base his religious fellowship upon mere theological agreement, but declares that its prime condition is, in the language of Dr. James Martineau, "to have a fearless respect for intellectual freedom, and to trust the bonds of piety, righteousness, and love, amidst large varieties of thought." This implies a belief in the absolute independence of each and every congregation of worshippers, free from all control by clergy, synod, or assembly. The individual rights of each member of the congregation are no less sacredly guarded. We deny the right of any church to reject or select members upon any grounds of superior faith or merit, and hence, also, we refuse to be held responsible for the character and performance, as individuals, of such persons as may choose to unite with us. To us the church is not a private circle of elect saints or a Sanhedrin of the infallibly right in religious matters. It is rather an assembly of worshippers and truth-seekers, a body of learners conscious of their ignorance and imperfection, an association for mutual improvement and helpfulness, and a well-approved instrumentality for uplifting and blessing the world.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY.

"Unitarianism," in the words of Dr. Dewey, "is not so much a system of thought, as a way of thinking." And Dr. Hedge expresses a similar idea when he says, "Unitarianism is not a theology; it is a collection of theologies." This is the natural and logical result of that free and fearless use of the reason in religious questions which distinguishes the Unitarian above all other Christians. He accepts no doctrine which seems to him unfounded and

irrational, no matter how venerable and sacred it may be, or what outward authority upholds it. He holds himself under the highest moral obligation to form his own opinions in religion and to justify that belief to his own mind and heart. The result of such a method is the greatest individuality of opinion. Yet, starting from the same or similar premises in the nature of things, and using the same method of reason in religion, it is natural that Unitarians should come to similar conclusions, and should find sufficient affinity in their views and aims to permit of the largest intellectual and moral sympathy and the most efficient union for practical work. If, therefore, Unitarians have no permanent, infallible, and binding creed, they nevertheless find themselves in substantial agreement on the cardinal points of religious belief, and are thus enabled to unite from time to time in many glorious affirmations concerning man's nature, duty, and destiny, and his relations with the Divine. Such a statement is herewith offered the reader. It is necessary to preface it by saying that for want of space, fundamentals in doctrine can alone be treated, and that for whatever may be affirmed in this discourse concerning the Unitarian belief, the writer alone must be held responsible. With every desire to do justice to the various shades of opinion in the body, it is nevertheless possible that his own views may insensibly color this statement of faith.

RELIGION.

In the first place, then, we believe in Religion; in the necessary existence, permanence, and importance of the religious sentiment. We hold that man is by natural constitution a religious being, and finds it a moral necessity to express his wonder, awe, veneration, and love in the forms and offices of worship. The researches of the

ethnologist coinciding with the testimony of Christian missionaries may inform us that there are savage peoples entirely destitute of religious ideas and practices, and here and there in civilized society we meet with persons who disclaim the possession of any religious feelings or desires whatever; yet this no more disproves the universality of religion than the occasional idiot disproves the distribution of intellectual gifts among men. Such exceptional instances merely show that the religious sentiment is not always and equally active; that it requires certain antecedents before it can manifest itself. It may not always be found in the earlier and rudimentary stages of human culture, but it is always found in civilized society. "Where humanity is at its highest, there religion is at its highest also." Consider the nations and the names, the eras and the events most noteworthy in human society, and you will find them intimately, inseparably connected with the history of religious development. As Goethe said, "The one, real, underlying theme in the history of the world, to which all other questions are subordinate, is the conflict between faith and unfaith." Therefore, we see in the religious sentiment no crude emotion, no politic concession to man's weakness, no perishable superstition, but the motive power of humanity, the radical force of society, the emancipator and inspirer of the human soul. Religion has produced the loftiest types of character and inspired the noblest deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice the world has ever known. And even when misdirected and distorted by the unenlightened reason, the selfish passions of mankind, in its very degradation it still remains an impressive witness to the mighty forces that are lodged in the spiritual constitution of man. So, though its outward forms are changing from day to day, though past sanctions no longer hold their power, and ancient creeds and churches crumble into ruin, the religious sentiment remains

the highest interest of human life, — an inspiring power that lifts man out of appetite and passion to higher levels of thought and feeling, and into likeness with the divine.

CHRISTIANITY.

In the second place, we believe in Christianity as the purest and best form of religion. Not that we deny the good in other forms of religion, but we believe Christianity to be the noblest among them, as well as the one most congenial to us from our antecedents and habits of thought and life. This statement requires some qualification, however. We do not believe in the Christianity of the Apostolic Church, with its admixture of old-time Jewish intolerance and Pagan superstition; nor in the Scholastic Christianity of the Middle Ages, which so often sacrificed truth to metaphysics, and love to logic; nor in the Christianity of Luther, or Calvin, or Jonathan Edwards, or of Channing even; but we believe in the Christianity of Christ. Penetrating beneath the accretions with which eighteen centuries of theological speculation and ecclesiastical development have overlaid his simple gospel, we think we can discern enough, even in the fragmentary record of his career and teaching which has been handed down the ages, to make the word and example of Jesus of Nazareth the way, the truth, and the life to us. This Christianity we accept as altogether the highest and best revelation of religious truth the world has ever known. Yet we do not believe that even the sublime precepts of Jesus exhaust the possibilities of the religious life. The vast increase of knowledge and experience which the centuries have brought with them have made possible also a new expansion and many new applications of religious truth. We are constantly receiving new revelations of divine wisdom from the Holy Spirit of God, which, as

Jesus himself said, was to continue his work and to lead us into all truth. Under this spiritual guidance and instruction we look for a constant growth in divine knowledge and holiness on the part of man, and reverently say with the apostle, "Leaving the first principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection."

GOD.

This belief in the Christian religion implies an acceptance of its first and fundamental truth, the existence and perfect character of God. But here again we must discriminate, for "every great affirmation holds a denial in its bosom." We do not believe in the God of Abraham and Jacob, who, despite the many spiritual and beautiful traits with which they invested him, is yet in parts and passions like unto men: who descends to the earth to hold familiar intercourse with his creatures, and can be flattered, diverted from his purpose, and over-influenced by them. Our God is no partial ruler who selects here an individual and there a nation for his particular favor, and casts off their fellows from his gracious provision. No, nor a childish God, who creates the world in six days, rests on the seventh, repents him of having made man, and constantly interferes in the working of the Universe to supplement his original plan by an afterthought. Nor do we believe in the God of the Romanist, whom the priest can create and control in the consecrated wafer; nor yet in the Sovereign Deity of the Calvinist, that mystical, mythical being with three distinct and equal natures and yet but one personality, who selfishly creates man for his own glory, capriciously predestines him to a career of happiness or of misery, and punishes him vindictively throughout all eternity for sins which he never committed or else could not help committing.

We do not believe in *a* God even, but in God! Who shall attempt to define him? For all definition is limitation, and he is the One and the All. Neither is it for the finite to comprehend the infinite. Hence, we dare not venture with the Tritheist to cramp the Divine Nature into a mathematical formula, or map out the necessary attributes of Deity, or declare that God must of needs be this and do that. We reverently confess his inscrutability, and the presumption of any analysis of the Divine psychology. To the soul's deep question comes back ever the self-same answer, "I am that which I am." Truly, "such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it!" Yet we believe in God, for it has been well said that while no subject is fraught with such supreme difficulties to the inquirer, no conviction is borne into the human mind with such irresistible power as that there is, there *must* be a God. Therefore, though we say with the Psalmist in despondent humility, "Who by searching can find out God?" we also ask with him in grateful joy, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, whither shall I flee from thy presence?" While we cannot grasp the thought of God as he is in himself, we may know him as he is to us, as he reveals himself to the understanding and conscience and heart of man. From every side come to us the convincing testimonies to his power and wisdom, love and holiness. And though in all our knowledge of him we must reverently confess, "Lo, these are only a part of his ways, but how little a portion is yet known of him," yet we feel assured by these very glimpses into his providential working that "he is infinitely more than the best believe or the happiest hope;" that we have a right, with Jesus, to look up trustfully and say, "Our Father, which art in Heaven." The truth, which the intellect cannot fathom, is disclosed to the loving and trustful heart.

REVELATION.

This leads me to say in the next place that we believe in Revelation. We do not, however, believe in any narrow interpretation of this great spiritual fact. We do not believe that God discloses his purposes here and there to a favored individual or nation, carves his divine commandments with his own finger on two tables of Arab granite, or seals his message to humanity within the lids of a single book. We do not believe that he has revealed himself but once, and then for all time. We believe rather in that larger view of revelation which makes the divine inspiration constant and perpetual:—

“Revelation is not sealed,
Answering unto man's endeavor,
Truth and right are still revealed.
That which came to ancient sages,
Greek, Barbarian, Roman, Jew,
Written in the heart's deep pages,
Shines to-day, forever new.”

The God we worship is immanent in his creation, and all things he made he inspires forever. The universe, as we behold it, is not a finality, complete and perfect, it is a world in the making. Through natural laws, and orderly, unbroken processes of evolution its development is ever going on. From monad to man the series ascends; from atom to angel the chain is unbroken. The clod beneath our feet thrills with germinal impulses, “the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God,” and of mankind it is written that “it doth not yet appear what we shall be.” The material universe, thus conceived, is an eternal and glorious revelation of God. What disclosures of indwelling power and wisdom are made to us in the facts and laws of substance! There is a new dispensation called Science which reveals the

God whom, as yet, it will not name. Darwin and Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, and Fiske are among the latter-day prophets whose burden is the Divine intelligence and foresight. True, they are chiefly concerned with the facts of matter; but read between the lines of their communications and you will discern the inspiring truth that all nature is instinct with life, and that all life is controlled by law. "Nothing is lifeless, nothing is lawless." The explanation of these two correlated facts is found — and found only — in the existence of a Supreme Being, whose will is the life, and whose perfect intelligence is the law. We welcome, therefore, each new discovery of science which increases our knowledge of the structure and method of the universe, since it also enlarges our conception of the Deity, more fully acquaints us with his holy will and way, and adds to our reverent awe at thought of him.

Again, we believe in the revelation which human History gives us of the watchful oversight and beneficent purposes of God. In a higher sense, history is only the annals of Providence, the records of God's dealing with man, evolving order and progress out of the chaos of human passions and deeds impressively teaching the supremacy of his laws, and enforcing obedience to them on the part of individuals and peoples.

Most clearly and potently of all, however, the Eternal and All-Holy One is revealed in the spirit of man; in his intelligence, character, affection, and will. By these gifts of mind and conscience and heart we interpret the existing nature of things. The human soul, divinely inspired, is the key to the visible creation. The measure in which we receive this inspiration is the measure of our personal desert and endeavor. The pure heart and the discerning intellect see God. To these he discloses himself as the Eternal Presence, the inner Light, the answering Word.

PRAYER.

All this implies that we believe in Worship and the exercise of Prayer; yet not in any superstitious or mechanical use of this high privilege of the soul. We do not believe in praying for material goods, for the miraculous curing of the sick, or the changing of the weather. Prayer is to us an act of devotion, and not of self-seeking. We pray because we feel it a spiritual necessity to utter our adoration, praise, and thankfulness to the all-perfect and all-loving Father. We pray to melt away the dross of worldly, selfish desire, to utter our aspiration after the pure and perfect life, and to bring our nature into obedience and harmony with the Divine will. This form of prayer we find, in our experience, an approved and efficacious method of spiritual invigoration and renewal; for they that in this wise ask receive the needed strength, and they that seek do find the peace of God.

THE BIBLE.

Unitarians believe in the Bible as a venerable and inspired record of this revelation of God in Nature, History, and the Human Soul. In the Old Testament Psalms, the Book of Job, and the Parables of Jesus the beauty and grandeur of the material world are celebrated with surpassing eloquence of speech, and profound religious lessons are drawn from it for the edification of the believer. In a long series of spiritual biographies, and in the typical history of the people of Israel, convincing testimony is borne to the presence and purpose of the Eternal in the career of individuals and of nations. In the solemn injunctions of ancient sages, the impassioned declarations of the prophets, the spiritual longings of the Psalmist, and, above all, in the saintly precepts and

holy example of the Christ, the spiritual capacities of man's nature are impressively vindicated, and his kinship with his heavenly Father established. For these qualities and services to our race we revere and believe in the Bible; yet not in the old and blind way. We do not hold it as a fetish, as a literally inspired and infallible oracle of God. We discriminate between what is permanent and what is transient, between what is valuable and what is indifferent in the Scriptures. We distinguish that which is universal from that which is due to the age and personality of the writer. We refuse to believe in the divine origin of the present canon, or in the equal value of the different books. We subject the Bible to the tests of reason and conscience, and apply to it the same laws of literary value that govern other books. We do not accept any crude ideas of the origin and government of the world, or of the character of the Deity, simply because we find them in the Bible. We cannot believe that the reading of the dreary chronicle of Hebrew wars, or the dry details of the Levitical law, is promotive of spiritual edification. Nor can we hold a Hebrew love poem like the Song of Solomon, or the fanatical Book of Revelation (notwithstanding its passages of great beauty and power), to be of equal inspiration with the Psalms of David or the Sermon on the Mount. And when this process of criticism is ended, what result have we arrived at? Why, the Bible is still the book of books to us. We believe that it contains the highest, deepest thoughts concerning man's relation with the infinite above, his fellow-beings around, and the mystery within him. We read in it, with O. B. Frothingham, "the purest expressions of faith and hope, the finest aspirations after truth, the sweetest sentiments of confidence and trust, hymns of praise, proverbs of wisdom, readings of the moral law, interpretations of providence, rules of worship . . .

sketches of saintly character, narratives of holy lives, lessons in devoutness, humility, patience, and charity." Truly, it is our manual of devotion, our treasury of moral and religious instruction, our unfailing source of spiritual nourishment.

Every race has its Bible, and all Scripture is given by inspiration. But, little as we know as yet concerning the ethnic Scriptures, — the Vedas, Zendavest, Shu Kings, and Koran, — we know enough to see that the Jewish and Christian sacred books are greatly superior to them in literary, moral, and religious values, and this because they flowed out of a higher conception of God and man and human duty, and out of a nearer converse with the Divine.

JESUS CHRIST.

I proceed to say that the Unitarian believes in Jesus Christ. The definition of this point of belief is attended with more or less difficulty, for on no article of faith are the opinions so various among us. To use once more the method of negation in order to emphasize our distinction from other Christian believers, we do not believe in the Jewish Messiah of the New Testament who is to return in the clouds, attended by troops of angels; at whose appearance the sun and moon will lose their lustre, the stars fall from heaven, and the graves give up their dead. Nor do we believe in the Christ of the Church, that ecclesiastical doll which has so long served as a lay figure for the trappings and shows of the liturgy, and lent the sanctions of its name to uphold the authority of the priesthood. Nor do we believe in the Christ of the creed, that theological abstraction which has no justification in history or in the nature of things, — this Christ of dogma, the second person in the Godhead, who descends to earth to make an atonement for man's sin, redeems him through the

shedding of his blood, and remains forever the mediator and saviour of all who accept and pray to or through him for forgiveness, redemption, and life eternal.

But we believe in Jesus the Christ of the gospels, stripped of all ecclesiastical wrappings, all theological refinements, all speculative fancies. On the subject of his nature, mission, and authority we are divided into two great schools, the first consisting of those who approach him on the divine, and the second of those who contemplate him from the human side of his nature. The former conceive him to have been a unique being, ranking between man and God, supernaturally born, divinely commissioned for a special work, and invested with superhuman power for that work. His word is infallible, his character impeccable, his spiritual authority final. The second class believe Jesus to have been naturally born of Joseph and Mary, endowed with qualities and powers differing in degree, and not in kind, from those which all men enjoy; that his character was a growth, and that by experiences and processes similar to our own he rose out of sin and error into the serene strength of an untemptable manhood. They believe that his word is authoritative in no other wise than as it is true, and that his mission was to instruct, emancipate, and spiritualize, and so redeem humanity from its bondage of error and sin. But all Unitarians agree that the mediation of Jesus was not official but purely moral; that we are redeemed, not by his blood, but by his goodness, and less by his death than by his life. For he died, "leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps."

Between these two extremes of belief which I have stated, the gradations, the shadings, the varieties of opinion concerning Jesus are innumerable. On all such disputed points, however, we agree to differ. For we hold it far more essential to have the spirit of Christ in our

hearts, than to have the correct view of his person and mission. And that this was also the opinion of the Master we know by his saying, "Whosoever shall speak against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever shall blaspheme the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven him."

HUMAN NATURE.

Let me add here that Unitarians believe in the lowest man as well as the highest. The most degraded of human beings still has in him something of God's delegated divinity, and, rightly placed and inspired, is capable of regeneration and a higher quality of life. The doctrine of total depravity, or that man is "lost in sin," and naturally incapable of good, we reject as unphilosophical and untrue. Not that we deny the actual imperfection of mankind. All men are sinners in the sense that all are violators of physical and moral laws established for their good. But this transgression is not an evidence that human nature is ruined, but only that it is *incomplete*. The current doctrine of the "fall" of man from a former state of ideal purity we hold to be irrational and baseless. We believe to the contrary, that man began on a very low plane of intellectual and moral being, and has manifested a constant progression in knowledge, freedom, and virtue. We believe that he inherits *propensities*, both good and bad, but never *guilt*. The personal experience we call sin is, with its attendant evils, a part of the Divine education of the race, and the necessary condition of its free moral agency. Therefore, while we mourn over every display of man's moral weakness, it does not prevent our believing in the essential dignity of human nature, and its gradual improvement through natural and orderly processes of evolution.

“Step by step, since time began,
We see the steady gain of man,”

and this gives us the largest faith and hope in his possible future.

IMMORTALITY.

Finally, we believe in our personal Immortality. We do not, however, attach it to any such crude notion as that of the resurrection of the physical body. Death is an incident in man's soul life which is neither to be sought nor avoided. When it comes it is a natural and incidental transition from one sphere of existence to another and still more spiritual one. The present life is beautiful and blessed if we but fulfil its conditions and use it aright. We believe that the future life may transcend and transfigure, but will not essentially change our present and personal relations. We believe that the soul will preserve in the hereafter its identity, memory, and affections. Heaven, to us, is not so much a place as a state, and not so much a state as a quality inhering in the soul. Endlessness is an attribute of our spiritual being, and eternal progress the condition of all life. The Unitarians, like all other believers, have their various philosophies and picturings of the life to come, but they try not to dogmatize about it, and not to insist on what is manifestly the offspring of religious feeling and faith as if it were a divine knowledge. The mystery which surrounds the future life was given for the health of man's spirit, and — as we see in Jesus — the higher, purer, the more absolute this faith in personal continuance after death, the less curiosity, the less speculation there is concerning its character and details. One thing suffices us, that the Kingdom of Heaven, whose immortal joys we long to taste, may be entered here and now, if, while on earth, we manifest the heavenly temper and live

the celestial life. This will be at once our most fitting preparation and our divinest encouragement. It seems necessary to say that the monstrous doctrine of eternal punishment we reject root and branch as derogatory to the character of God and utterly unfair to man. As we believe in human responsibility, however, it follows that we believe in the Divine Retribution. But we dislike to put forward either reward or punishment as a motive for moral action. We believe with the Scripture that "he that doeth wrong shall suffer for the wrong he doeth, and every one shall receive for the things done in his body, be they good or evil." All such retribution is, however, disciplinary and remedial in its character, and will be followed by the restoration of the offender to the fulness of the Divine favor.

CONCLUSION.

Such, then, is the Unitarian faith as I understand it. But all such statements must be partial and of temporary value. They are "good for this day only." The Unitarian is a progressive Christian. He seeks new light continually, and accepts new truth from any source, modifying or supplementing his creed accordingly. He has no fear that the fundamentals will be overthrown, for the foundation of God standeth exceeding sure. Believing thus in Religion, Christianity, God, Revelation, Jesus Christ, Prayer, the Bible, Human Nature, and Immortality, who can justly charge us with not believing anything? True, like all new and struggling faiths we are compelled to make many denials in defining our position, but every such negation carries with it a corresponding affirmation. We confidently declare, like the apostle of old: "If that which passed away was glorious, how much more that which remaineth." Though but a small sect, numerically speak-

ing, we venture to believe that we exercise an influence out of all proportion to our numbers. There is not an Orthodox believer in the community the rigors of whose creed are not insensibly softened by the existence of the Unitarian protest. There is not a liberal preacher in the Orthodox pulpit who is not encouraged and emboldened by our earlier, broader, and more radical affirmations. The new readings of Scripture and creed, the new interpretations of religious truth which so delight his auditors, have been household words among the Unitarians for half a century. We have no desire to found a great sect; we do not imagine that the Church of the future will be identical with our Unitarian denomination; but we believe that the *gospel* we proclaim is to inherit the earth. The present generation affords abundant witness to its marvellous increase and acceptance. The most popular preachers of the day are they who utter the sentiments and live in the spirit of our faith, however they may disguise it under ancient forms and names. The leading religious newspapers maintain it, albeit with bated breath and circumlocution. The literature of America thrills and tingles with its prophecy. The public press is its herald and champion. It is the underlying philosophy of modern philanthropy and reform. The science of to-day is its mighty pioneer and ally. It is not too much to say that the great thought of *Unity in Diversity*, which we represent in our denominational name and spirit, is the leading idea of the **twentieth century**.

It is this that reconciles us with the small size of our body and its slow rate of increase. We feel that this must be so of necessity, since we lay the emphasis not on church extension, but on the development and spread of our ideas. Yet we have our definite place and work in the Christian church as the forerunners and pioneers of the grand army of believers. We are among those who lead the advance.

who survey the ground, clear away obstructions, and send back constantly reports of safety, faith, and cheer; and presently the main body of Christianity moves forward to occupy the positions we have won and assured. Such is the mission of religious reformers, among whom we are numbered. But when the grand army has come up to where we stand, we may not rest on our arms. There are new foes to fight, new victories to be won, new truths to be discovered. So, having done all, we still stand as faithful sentinels on duty, as pioneers ready for service. With our loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, with the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation, our only weapon the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God, — so we stand, praying and watching for the divine summons that bids us go forward into all truth, the truth that frees and saves.

APPENDIX.

I.

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH.

“UNITARIANS affirm that their belief is simply a return to the primitive Christian doctrines: that the teaching of Christ and his apostles, as conveyed in the New Testament, strictly conformed to the Hebrew tenet of the absolute unity of God; that for more than a century the early Christians were taught and believed this tenet; that this belief was first impaired by the speculations of the Alexandrine and Platonic schools on the mode of the divine existence and manifestations; and that the Trinitarian dogma obtained acceptance through the co-operating influences of ecclesiastical authority and imperial dictation.” The whole period prior to the Council of Nice may be regarded as the Unitarian epoch of Christianity, during which the predominant opinion, however highly it exalted the Christ, stopped short of the ascription of proper deity to him. It was not till the fourth and succeeding centuries that the doctrine of the Trinity was completely formulated and established. While this continued for hundreds of years to be the orthodox view in the Church, the controversy on this point was never closed, but through the successive centuries there was an unbroken line of believers who, however differing on other points of faith, stood together as Unitarians in their opposition to the Trinity. Arianism — the view of the person of Christ which promised at one time to become the orthodox

doctrine of the Catholic Church — was a phase of Unitarianism. It is traceable down through the Middle Ages, in the persons of great schoolmen. At the Reformation, its ideas and principles were far more widely spread than is generally imagined, and, but for what we call chance, would have assumed very influential proportions in the new life of Europe. It did actually take control of a considerable section of Eastern Europe, where it has continued the dominant form of faith to this day. In the 16th century the Socini (Laelius and Faustus, uncle and nephew, of Italian birth) made a lodgment in Poland and Transylvania for the Unitarian belief, and there exist in the latter country some hundred or more Unitarian churches, together with a divinity school and university. Unitarianism is no very new *ism* in Christendom. It has existed in separate congregations in England ever since the Reformation. It is to be found among the various churches of Europe during this same period, at times bidding fair to develop into large proportions, and seriously alarming all orthodox authorities.

Organized Unitarianism in this country was the gradual outcome of rational religious thought in the Congregational and Puritan churches of New England. The movement begun by Freeman, Buckminster, Channing, and their associates, is little more than a century old. The various churches and pastors that found their way out of the old faith into more liberal modes of thinking, ostracized by their more orthodox fellow-Christians, for a time stood separate and alone, jealously guarding their individual independence, until, tiring of their isolation, they gradually came together and formed various associations for fellowship and concerted action. The body of recent years has shown considerable missionary zeal, though rather in spreading abroad its distinctive views than in planting new churches. It numbers, at present,

four hundred and sixty societies, of which two-thirds are located in the New England States. The city of Boston is the Unitarian stronghold, and has over thirty Unitarian churches. More than a hundred congregations, planted in New England previous to the War of Independence, went over to the Unitarians, including eight of the nine leading parishes of Boston, and the original church founded by the Pilgrim fathers at Plymouth, Mass. Our ministers are trained at the theological seminaries at Cambridge (Harvard University), Mass., and Meadville, Penn. The principal Unitarian journals are — the “Christian Register,” published weekly at Boston, Mass. (with which “The Unitarian” and “Old and New” have recently been united), and “The Pacific Unitarian,” published monthly at San Francisco. “The Hibbert Journal” is an undenominational quarterly, devoted to liberal theology, and published in London, England.

The Denominational Centre is the American Unitarian Association, a missionary and publication society; president, Samuel A. Eliot, D.D.; secretary, Rev. Charles E. St. John; assistant secretary, George W. Fox; treasurer, Francis H. Lincoln.

The Association has published a long series of books, tracts, etc., treating of the history, principles, methods and aims of the Unitarian body, which it keeps on hand in its Book-Room for sale or gratuitous distribution. It is the custodian of denominational funds, and plants and sustains missionaries and missionary movements in all parts of the United States. One feature of its work is the support of able representatives of its faith at important college centres. (Ann Arbor, Ithaca, Madison, Berkeley, etc.) The offices of the Association are in the denominational building erected for it at No. 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., at an expense of \$200,000 or more.

The principal missionary and publication society for the West is the Western Unitarian Conference. Its office is at No. 175 Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.; Morton D. Hull is its president; and Rev. Fred V. Hawley is its secretary. The Western Conference holds an annual session in May, at some central point in the West. The Western Unitarian Sunday School Society also has its office at 175 Dearborn Street.

There are also general conferences for the Southern, Middle, and Pacific States. The Unitarian Book-Room and Headquarters in New York City are at No. 104 East 20th Street, with Rev. D. W. Morehouse as missionary superintendent. The San Francisco Book-Room is at No. 374 Sutter Street, and Rev. G. W. Stone, secretary.

The National Conference is an advisory body, meeting once in two years, usually at Saratoga, N.Y., in the month of September; president, Hon. Carroll D. Wright; secretary, Rev. D. W. Morehouse. Two thousand or more persons usually attend its sessions, at which papers are read on the leading questions of religious interest, the denominational policy is discussed, with a general exchange of ideas and sentiments.

The Ministers' Institute is held every alternate year for the free and scholarly discussion of the theological and philosophical issues of the day.

The Unitarian Sunday School Society maintains a Book-Room and Headquarters at No. 25 Beacon Street, Boston. It publishes a valuable list of manuals, orders of service, song books, and other aids in the religious education of children; also a semi-monthly paper for the young, "Every Other Sunday." Its president is Rev. Edward A. Horton, to whom communications may be addressed at No. 25 Beacon Street.

"The National Alliance of Unitarian Women," with one hundred and sixty branch or local societies, has de-

veloped much missionary activity among the women of the Unitarian fellowship. It aids struggling churches and missionaries, and interests itself especially in the extension of the Post-Office Mission, a characteristic and important agency for distributing Unitarian literature and spreading liberal principles through advertisement and correspondence. Miss Emma C. Low is president, and Mrs. Mary B. Davis secretary, of the Alliance.

There is also a large number of local conferences, women's auxiliary associations, Sunday-School societies, Young People's Guilds and Clubs.

In addition to these Unitarian organizations, there are over seven hundred Universalist churches in America holding the same or similar views, and nearly two thousand societies of the Christian denomination, in more or less general agreement on cardinal points as held by Unitarians. In England we find about three hundred Unitarian societies. Their denominational centre is the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, with offices at Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, London. Rev. W. Copeland Bowie is the secretary and general organizer. In Hungary there are one hundred and nine Unitarian congregations, each with a school attached. Our form of faith has existed for three hundred years in that country. In France, Italy, Holland, and Switzerland, the liberal wing of the Protestant churches holds the same form of faith. In Germany, where a State Church prevents the formation of specially Unitarian organizations, there is a large element among both Lutherans and Evangelicals which publicly avows its sympathy with the liberal theology. The *Protestantenverein*, its principal Association, has many branch associations. In Switzerland the *Verein fuer freies Christentum* is our powerful ally. Even in far off India the liberal Christian Church has a noble ally in the Brahmo Somaj, or society of Hindu Theists.

A successful lodgment for the Unitarian faith has in late years been made in Japan.

The International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, organized in Boston in 1900, held its first and largely attended meeting in London in 1901, and will meet in September, 1903, in Amsterdam. Fifteen nationalities and twenty-one church connections are represented in its membership. Prof. J. Estlin Carpenter, Oxford, England, is the president; and Rev. Charles W. Wendte, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., is the general secretary.

II. THE UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP.

THE Unitarian lays no stress on the public profession of religious belief, he points to no long roll of converts added to the true faith, he takes no pleasure in showy ecclesiasticism or church extension. His pride is rather in the cultured minds, the well rounded characters, the gracious lives, the notable examples of uprightness, humanity, and piety which his form of faith contributes, to illustrate the perfections and swell the triumphs of the religion of Jesus.

Among the representative men and women who in modern times, and in this country and in England, have belonged to the Unitarian fellowship, we may instance the following.

Among religious teachers, theologians, and preachers —

Wm. Ellery Channing.	Andrews Norton.	Noah Worcester.
James Freeman.	Henry Ware, Sr.	George W. Burnap.
J. T. Kirkland.	Henry Ware, Jr.	W. O. B. Peabody.
William Ware.	Alvan Lamson.	Nath. L. Frothingham.
Jared Sparks.	Aaron Bancroft.	Convers Francis.
Samuel Gilman.	W. F. P. Greenwood.	Ephraim Peabody.

Charles T. Brooks.
 Edmund H. Sears.
 James Walker.
 Ezra S. Gannett.
 George R. Noyes.
 Orville Dewey.
 Charles Follen.
 Samuel J. May.
 Thomas Hill.
 George E. Ellis.
 Samuel Longfellow.
 William H. Channing.
 William J. Potter.
 Charles Low.
 George W. Hosmer.
 John Weiss.
 Henry Giles.
 Abiel A. Livermore.
 Oliver Stearns.
 Samuel Johnson.
 Franklin C. Southworth.
 A. D. Mayo.
 Edward H. Hall.
 Nicholas P. Gilman.
 George L. Cary.
 James T. Bixby.
 Samuel R. Calthrop.
 Francis Tiffany.
 Wm. W. Fenn.

John Bidle.
 Theophilus Lindsey.
 Joseph Priestley.
 James Martineau.
 F. W. Newman.
 Charles Beard.
 Alexander Gordon.
 Stopford A. Brooke.
 J. Estlin Carpenter.
 H. W. Cro-skey.
 James Drummond.
 John Page Hopps.
 G. Vance Smith.

T. Hamilton Thom.
 P. H. Wicksteed.
 Richard Armstrong.
 Brooke Herford.
 W. Copeland Bowie.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (once a
 Unitarian minister in Boston).
 J. G. Palfrey.
 Theodore Parker.
 John Pierpont.
 Frederic H. Hedge.
 James Freeman Clarke.
 Henry W. Bellows.
 A. P. Peabody.
 Thomas Starr King.
 Wm. R. Alger.
 O. B. Frothingham.
 Chas. H. Brigham.
 Wm. G. Eliot.
 C. A. Bartol.
 Robert Collyer.
 Joseph H. Allen.
 Edward Everett Hale.
 Grindall Reynolds.
 Horatio Stebbins.
 C. C. Everett.
 Wm. H. Furness.
 Francis G. Peabody.
 Minot J. Savage.
 John W. Chadwick.
 George Batchelor.
 Thomas L. Eliot.
 Samuel A. Eliot.
 Jenkin Lloyd Jones.
 Henry M. Simmons.
 Thomas Van Ness.
 Theodore C. Williams.
 Jabez T. Sunderland.
 Merle St. Croix Wright.
 Howard N. Brown.
 William C. Gannett.
 Frederick L. Hosmer.

Thomas R. Slicer.
 Paul R. Frothingham.
 Charles G. Ames.
 Charles E. St. John.
 Joseph May.
 Samuel M. Crothers.
 Edward A. Horton.
 Edward Cummings.

James DeNormandie.
 Rush R. Shippen.
 Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.
 Mrs. Mary Livermore.
 Charles F. Dole.
 George A. Thayer.
 J. H. Crooker.
 Wm. H. Lyon,

and many others notable as thinkers, scholars, and preachers.¹

Also the following philanthropists and reformers:—

Miss Mary Carpenter.
 Miss Dorothea Dix.
 Dr. Noah Worcester.
 Dr. S. G. Howe.
 Dr. James Jackson.
 Samuel J. May.
 Edward Everett Hale.
 Henry W. Bellows (Pres. of the
 U. S. Sanitary Commission).
 Miss Elizabeth P. Peabody.
 Mrs. Humphry Ward.
 Frank B. Sanborn.
 John Pounds (founder of Ragged
 Schools in England).
 Abbott and Amos Lawrence.
 Peter Cooper.
 Joseph Tuckerman.
 Charles F. Barnard.

Samuel J. Barrows.
 Edwin D. Mead.
 Henry Bergh.
 Ezra Cornell.
 William H. Baldwin.
 Enoch Pratt.
 John Lowell.
 Theodore D. Weld.
 Henry P. Kidder.
 Miss Mary A. Livermore.
 Mrs. Mary Hemenway.
 Mrs. Lucretia Mott.
 Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton.
 Mrs. Josephine Shaw Lowell.
 Mrs. Angelina Grimke Weld.
 Miss Susan B. Anthony.
 Mrs. Lucy Stone Blackwell.
 Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.

Among scientists and educators we may mention:—

The Darwin family.
 Dr. Samuel Clarke.
 Dr. Joseph Priestley.
 Richard Porson.

Dr. Nathaniel Lardner.
 David Hartley.
 Jeremy Bentham.
 Francis Hutcheson.

¹ The compiler of this list apologizes for its inadequacy. He might justly have added the names of many other clergymen well known among us for their learning, piety, and efficient services to Unitarian Christianity.—C. W. W.

David Ricardo.
 Sir Charles Lyell.
 Dr. William B. Carpenter.
 Professor De Morgan.
 Josiah Wedgwood.
 Sir W. Fairbairn.
 Mrs. Mary Somerville.
 Benjamin Franklin.
 Miss Maria Mitchell.
 Nathaniel Bowditch.
 Horace Mann.
 Loammi Baldwin
 John Fiske.

Charles W. Eliot (and the previous seven presidents of Harvard College, and many of its leading professors, such as),
 Thomas Hill.
 Jeffries Wyman
 Asaph Hall.
 Edward C. Pickering.
 Benj. A. Gould.
 Joseph Lovering.
 Benjamin Pierce.
 Wolcott Gibbs.
 C. C. Felton.
 Louis Agassiz.

A long and brilliant line of statesmen, jurists, and public officers have belonged to this faith: among them, four presidents of the United States: —

Thomas Jefferson.
 John Adams.
 John Quincy Adams.
 Millard Fillmore
 Vice-President Hannibal Hamlin.
 Alexander H. Everett.
 Edward Everett (once a Unitarian minister).
 Samuel Dexter.
 Christopher Gore.
 Fisher Ames.
 Harrison Gray Otis.
 Charles Sumner.
 Daniel Webster (for thirty years a pew-owner and communicant at Brattle Street Unitarian Church, Boston).

Henry Wheaton.
 Charles Francis Adams.
 Josiah Quincy.
 George F. and E. R. Hoar.
 John C. Calhoun.
 Dorman B. Eaton.
 Nathaniel Dane.
 George William Curtis.
 Thomas Dawes Eliot.
 John P. Hale.
 William B. Allison.
 Leland Stanford.
 George C. Perkins.
 Henry B. Anthony.
 William E. Chandler.
 Justin D. Morrill.
 Carroll D. Wright,

and many other Cabinet officers, United States Senators, Congressmen, and men prominent in national politics.

Among Jurists we lay claim to: —

John Marshall, Chief Justice
United States Supreme Court.

Joseph Story, Associate Justice.

James Moore Wayne, Associate
Justice.

John A. Campbell, Associate
Justice.

Samuel F. Miller and Oliver
Wendell Holmes. Associate
Justices United States Su-
preme Court.

Theophilus Parsons, Chief Jus-
tice Supreme Court, Massa-
chusetts.

Lemuel Shaw, Chief Justice Su-
preme Court, Massachusetts.

George T. Bigelow, Chief Jus-
tice Supreme Court, Massa-
chusetts.

John Wells, Chief Justice Su-
preme Court, Massachusetts.

Pliny Myrick, Chief Justice Su-
preme Court, Massachusetts.

Walbridge A. Field, Chief Jus-
tice Supreme Court, Massa-
chusetts.

Charles Allen, Justice Supreme
Court, Massachusetts.

Ebenezer R. Hoar, Justice Su-
preme Court, Massachusetts.

Seth Ames, Justice Supreme
Court, Massachusetts.

Benjamin F. Thomas, Justice
Supreme Court, Massachu-
setts.

Samuel S. Wilde, Justice Su-
preme Court, Massachusetts.

Levi Lincoln, Justice Supreme
Court, Massachusetts.

John Lowell, Justice United
States Court.

Chief Justice Henry A. Bellows,
New Hampshire.

Chief Justice Cushing of New
Hampshire.

Chief Justice Jeremiah Smith,
New Hampshire.

Chief Justice Charles Doe, New
Hampshire.

Chief Justice John Appleton,
Maine.

Chief Justice Ames, Rhode
Island.

Judge Jeremiah Smith, New
Hampshire.

Judge Asa Fowler, New Hamp-
shire.

W. H. Beatty, Chief Justice Su-
preme Court, California.

Oscar L. Shafter, Justice Su-
preme Court, California.

Joseph H. Choate.

James C. Carter.

George Ticknor Curtis.

with hundreds of others hardly less eminent.

Among Governors we recall:—

John Davis, Massachusetts.

John H. Clifford, Massachusetts.

John A. Andrew, Massachusetts.

Levi Lincoln, Massachusetts.

George S. Boutwell, Massachu-
setts.

John D. Long, Massachusetts.

Thomas Talbot, Massachusetts.

George D. Robinson, Massachusetts.	Benjamin F. Prescott, New Hampshire.
J. Q. A. Brackett, Massachusetts.	Governor Lippitt, Rhode Island.
Oliver Ames, Massachusetts.	Ichabod Goodwin, New Hampshire.
F. T. Greenhalge, Massachusetts.	Alphonso Taft, Ohio.
Roger Wolcott, Massachusetts.	George Hoadly, Ohio.
Edward Kent, Maine.	Charles Robinson, Kansas.
Onslow Stearns, New Hampshire.	John T. Bagley, Michigan.
Charles H. Bell, New Hampshire.	

Among leaders in commerce, names that occur to us are : —

Thomas H. Perkins.	Nathan Appleton.
Harrison Gray Otis.	Abbott Lawrence.
Amos Lawrence.	Samuel A. Eliot.
John Amory Lowell.	Peter C. Brooks.
John C. Amory.	Nathaniel Thayer.
Jonathan Phillips.	John E. Forbes.
Thomas Wigglesworth.	Elisha Atkins.
J. Huntington Wolcott.	Henry P. Kidder.
Augustus Hemenway.	William Endicott, Jr.
Stephen C. Phillips.	Peter Cooper.
Thomas Tileston.	George Partridge.
Ezra Cornell.	Enoch Pratt.
Jonas G. Clark.	Moses H. Grinnell.
Stephen Salisbury.	A. A. Low.
Robert G. Shaw.	Horace Davis.
M. E. Ingalls.	

American literature and art are thoroughly Unitarian. Two-thirds of the eminent names on our list of authors belong to this faith ; namely : —

Four of our leading poets, —

William Cullen Bryant.	James Russell Lowell.
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.	Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Seven leading historians, —

George Bancroft.	Francis Parkman.
J. Lothrop Motley.	Jared Sparks.
W. H. Prescott.	John G. Palfrey.
Richard Hildreth.	

Artists like Fanny Kemble, Charlotte Cushman, Harriet Hosmer, W. W. Story, Thomas Ball, Larkin G. Mead, and Daniel C. French, and a great number of the favorite names in American literature, such as : —

Ralph Waldo Emerson.	John Weiss.
E. P. Whipple.	F. J. Child.
Jones Very.	George Ripley.
George Ticknor.	Charles W. Upham.
Charles Sprague.	James T. Fields.
Sylvester Judd.	Nathaniel Hawthorne.
H. T. Tuckerman.	William W. Story.
Bayard Taylor.	George S. Hillard.
Louisa M. Alcott.	David A. Wasson.
Bret Harte.	Helen Hunt Jackson.
Margaret Fuller.	Christopher C. Cranch.
Mrs. Kirkland.	Grace Greenwood.
Lydia Maria Child.	J. T. Trowbridge.
Charles Eliot Norton.	Thomas W. Higginson.
Julia Ward Howe.	Harriet Prescott Spofford.
Henry Thoreau.	Caroline D. Henty.
Miss Sedgwick.	John W. Chadwick.
Mrs. Follen.	Edward Everett Hale
Charles T. Brooks.	Edward R. Sill.
Mrs. Edna D. Cheney.	R. H. Stoddard.
	John S. Dwight.

In England we find the following Unitarian authors : —

Sir Matthew Hale.	Lady Byron.
Mark Akenside.	Sir. Wm. Jones.
Judge Talfourd.	Wm. Roscoe.
Mrs. Barbauld.	Samuel Rogers.
Leigh Hunt and Charles Lamb	Frances P. Cobbe.
(in opinion).	Mrs. Humphrey Ward.
Joanna Baillie.	Mrs. Gaskell.
Sarah Hazlitt.	Charles Dickens.

Sir John Bowring, the distinguished statesman, and writer of notable hymns like "In the cross of Christ I glory;"

Mrs. Sarah Flower Adams, author of "Nearer, my God, to Thee;"

Helen M. Williams, who wrote "While Thee I seek, protecting Power."

While the foregoing list does not lay claim to absolute correctness, it is below rather than above the truth, since one even more favorable to the Unitarian cause could be made.

Besides this enumeration of prominent persons connected, in times past or present, with the Unitarian body, there is still a larger number who, while not belonging to our fellowship, have avowed Unitarian sentiments. Among these were — the philosopher John Locke; the Quaker William Penn, who, in his “Sandy Foundations Shaken,” wrote against the Trinity, although when imprisoned for so doing he afterwards recanted; and Sir Isaac Newton, whose creed was as follows:—

“There is one God, the Father, ever living, omnipresent, omniscient, Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. The Father is the invisible God, whom no eye hath seen or can see. . . . Christ came not to diminish the worship of his Father. . . . It is not necessary to salvation to direct our prayers to any other than the Father, in the name of the Son.”

The great English poet John Milton was an unbeliever in the Trinity, however orthodox his creed may have been in other respects; and the devout hymnist Dr. Watts wrote not long before his death, “Surely I ought to know the God whom I worship,—whether he be a pure and simple being, or whether Thou art a threefold Deity, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. . . . The Deity is not made up of three such distinct and separate spirits.”¹

Of eminent Americans, not Unitarians, we may cite the following declarations as evidence of substantial sympathy with our views. George Washington wrote:—

¹ A Solemn Address to the Deity.

"I am not less ardent in my wish that you may succeed in your toleration in religious matters. Being no bigot myself to any mode of worship, I am disposed to indulge the professors of Christianity in the church with that road to heaven which to them shall seem the most direct, plainest, easiest, and least liable to exception."

Dr. Abercrombie, rector of the Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, which Washington, when President, attended, says, "Washington was a Deist." Thomas Jefferson¹ bears similar testimony.

Rev. Dr. Wilson, an eminent Episcopal clergyman of Albany, N. Y., half a century ago published an article in the daily "Advertiser" of that city, of October 29, 1831, in which, after a most thorough investigation of Washington's religious belief, he is compelled to make this confession:—

"I have perused *every line* that Washington ever gave to the public, and I do not find *one impression* in which he pledges himself as a professor of Christianity. [That is, according to Dr. Wilson's orthodox interpretation of Christianity.] I think *any* man who will candidly do as I have done will come to the conclusion that he was a Deist and nothing more."

Benjamin's Franklin's creed was as follows:—

"I believe in one God, the Creator of the universe; that he governs it by his providence; that he ought to be worshipped; that the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children; that the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion. As to Jesus of Nazareth, I think his system of morals and his religion; as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw, or is likely to see; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present Dissenters of England, some doubts of his Divinity; though it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having never studied it, and think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon an opportunity of knowing the truth with less trouble."

¹ Works, vol. iv. p. 572.

While in England, Franklin attended the Unitarian services of Rev. Thomas Belsham at Essex Chapel, London, and its records show that he was one of the regular contributors to the support of that place of worship.

The religious views of Thomas Jefferson are well known to have been even more radical than those of Franklin. At the Unitarian Building in Boston may be seen framed an autograph letter of Jefferson's, reading as follows:—

MONTICELLO, Jan. 18, 1824.

I THANK you, Sir, for the copy you have been so kind as to send me of the rev^d Mr. Bancroft's Unitarian sermons. I have read them with great satisfaction, and always rejoice in efforts to restore us to primitive Christianity, in all the simplicity in which it came from the lips of Jesus. Had it never been sophisticated by the subtleties of Commentators, nor paraphrased into meanings totally foreign to its character, it would at this day have been the religion of the whole civilised world. but the metaphysical abstractions of Athanasius, and the maniac ravings of Calvin, tinctured plentifully with the foggy dreams of Plato, have so loaded it with absurdities and incomprehensibilities as to drive into infidelity men who had not time, patience or opportunity to strip it of it's meretricious trappings and to see it in all it's native simplicity and purity. I trust, however, that the same free exercise of private judgment which gave us our political reformation, will extend it's effects to that of religion, which the present volume is well calculated to encourage and promote.

TH. JEFFERSON.

On hearing a sermon by Dr. Channing, Jefferson wrote: "I trust that there is not a young man now in the United States who will not die a Unitarian."

Thomas Paine's creed was as follows:—

"I believe in one God and no more, and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe in the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy. The true Deist has but one Deity, and his

religion consists in contemplating his power, wisdom, and benignity, and in endeavoring to imitate him in everything moral, scientific, and mechanical."

The noble Italian agitator, Mazzini, was, in religion, a Unitarian Theist. So also is Emilio Castelar, the eloquent Spanish leader; and Louis Kossuth, the eminent Hungarian liberator, said not long before his death to a friend (Professor John Kovacs, of Kolosvar College): "The Unitarian faith is the only faith which has a future; the only one that can influence the intelligent and interest the indifferent."

Concerning Abraham Lincoln, the author of "Six Months at the White House" writes:—

"The conversation turned upon religious subjects, and Mr. Lincoln made this impressive remark: 'I have never united myself to any church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith. When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Saviour's condensed statement of the substance of both Law and Gospel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul.'"

Such a church the Unitarian at least tries to maintain.

Similar extracts from the writings and biographies of eminent men might be multiplied; but in closing this note it is only necessary to allude to the Unitarian principles of members of the other great liberal sects. Such are Dr. Hosea Ballou, Horace Greeley, Dr. E. H. Chapin, and other past and present members of the Universalist communion; Robert Dale Owen, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, and other leading Spiritualists; Elias Hicks, J. G. Whittier, Lucretia Mott, and the Progressive Friends; Prof. David Swing, Dr. H. W. Thomas, Mrs. Elizabeth

Thompson, Gerrit Smith, President David Starr Jordan, Prof. Joseph Le Conte of the Church Universal, besides many liberal Jews.

Truly, this is a goodly fellowship. Take these away and American society would have lost its savor, its chiefest inspiration and encouragement. A faith that can satisfy such illustrious minds, and inspire such gracious lives, must have in it the power to redeem and sanctify humanity. And those who belong to the Unitarian communion may have the grateful sense that, though their fellowship is still small numerically considered, it yet includes so large a portion of the culture, virtue, and piety of America.

A purer Christianity, however slowly, is to take the place of that which bears but its name. Cannot we become heralds of this better day? Let our hearts bid it welcome! Let our lives reveal its beauty and its power. — **DR. WM. ELLERY CHANNING.**

Unitarianism is that free and progressive development of historic Christianity which aspires to be synonymous with universal ethics and universal religion. — **REV. SAMUEL J. BARROWS.**

Our (Unitarian) problem is not primarily intellectual but moral. It is the reconciliation of the Spirit of Truth with the Spirit of Devotion. . . . Our task is to bring together thought and reverence, the fearless mind and the uplifted heart. — **REV. A. W. JACKSON.**

The work of Unitarianism is not done. It is scarcely begun. Our cause is in its early Spring, not in its late Fall. — **REV. J. T. SENDERLAND.**

The truths ye urge are borne abroad
By every wind and tide;
The voice of Nature and of God
Speaks out upon your side.

The weapons which your hands have found
Are those which heaven hath wrought,
Light, Truth, and Love; — your battle-ground
The free, broad field of Thought.

REV. SAMUEL LONGFELLOW.

In the love of truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.— *Basis of Union of many Unitarian Churches.*

THE CHURCH OF THE TWO COMMANDMENTS.

These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

And we invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.— *Basis of Fellowship of the General Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches.*

UNITARIANISM:

WHAT DOES IT STAND FOR?

BY

REV. E. A. HORTON.



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

OUR FAITH.

*The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.*

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test ; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

WHAT DOES UNITARIANISM STAND FOR?

I OFFER THEE THREE THINGS. — 2 *Samuel*, xxiv. 12.

It is my purpose to answer, as far as I can, this question: *What does Unitarianism stand for?* What does it, as a movement, offer to the world, amid the various contributions of other religious denominations? Every important phase in the evolution of Christianity has brought a distinct and needed emphasis on some doctrine, form, tendency, or work, and in that specific function has the existence of that particular movement been justified. Luther offered a plea for Justification by Faith; Calvin dwelt on Divine Decrees; Wesley poured forth a fervid proclamation of man's free-will and gospel grace; Roman Catholicism enforces works and church infallibility; Episcopacy upholds Christian unity in liturgical confessions, with Apostolic Succession.—and thus we might readily assign to the numerous branches their peculiar fruit. Unitarianism stands for a threefold mission, not of finished events, or completed thought, but a mission of spirit and elements. It offers these three things: 1. The Love of Truth; 2. Enthusiasm for Humanity; 3. The Spirit of Jesus. The love of truth as contrasted with the love of dogma or tenet; enthusiasm for humanity as opposed to selfish salvation and derogatory views of this world and man's nature; the spirit of Jesus as set against metaphysical statements of his rank and mission, and discipleship by mere profession. Plant these spirit-

ual forces in the individual, and the result must be progress toward strong symmetrical character. Give them scope in society, and they make for freedom, equity, and fraternity. Put them vigorously at work in the church of any belief, and there follow, as the day the night, more life, the spirit of loving inclusiveness, and true progress. Being forces and not forms, they live on. By virtue of their fluent and adaptable nature they serve to unite different minds and to sway varying rituals. It is asked of Unitarianism: "How are your churches held together, since no creed or common code of doctrine and no ecclesiastical authority are visible?" We are an humble forerunner of the Universal Church, which, when it rises, must be held together by such ties as those that so successfully unite us. No other kind of union is desirable; no other is possible for the future. But let us examine successively each one of these "three things."

First, *The Love of Truth.*

There is urgent need of a denomination at all times to stand for the honest, heroic search for truth. I do no injustice to the churches of Christendom when I say that they do not stand for this, and are willing to have it known; they esteem their position the safe and sacred one. Question them and they reply in clear tones for all the world to hear: "We have found the truth, and the revelation is closed. To attempt to think beyond, around, or over this revealed truth is irreligious and endangering to the soul's future welfare. There is a conflict irrepressible between God's truth and man's devices." To this Unitarianism unflinchingly replies with an assertion of a continuous revelation and the sacredness of all truth. God is one, his truth is one; man's needs are fed by constant gifts of truth from experience, history, science, and art. Old truth always suffers unless helped out by the new. It cannot do its

work if left alone in supposed supernatural isolation. This was conspicuously the purpose of Jesus. "I am come to be a witness to the truth," he said, to instil a passion for it into man's heart until it should reign supreme over sloth and pride and bigotry of intellect; and standing between two civilizations, between the old and the new dispensations, he cried, "I seek to fulfil;" and they stoned him. "I come to give you perpetual freedom in the fulfilling of law, usage, and ancient commandment;" and they crucified him. This is the vast world-picture of the ever-recurring struggle in man's life and in the church's history. Those are disloyal to old truths who fiercely guard them from all changes. While they watch the creeds and waste the opportunities, the seed-time of sowing passes, and the new harvest is postponed. Those are loyal and true servants of "the faith" who fulfil it from generation to generation, by new interpretations, noble enrichments, and wise reconstructions.

The love of truth in and for itself, the love of truth in all its breadth and power, is essential; for the tyranny of creeds is not ended. That old protest of Channing and early Unitarianism must still sound out over the land, rebuking the perversion of Christianity into doctrinal finalities. The evil is a real and gigantic one; it creates a terrible injustice; it converts living religion into an affair of memory and fluency; it sets bounds to the free course of God's spirit; it fastens premature old age on the young mind and removes the grandest incentive in man's nature, his search for truth; it dwarfs the sentiments of wonder and aspiration; it tends to substitute a shallow pietistic self-satisfaction for the contrite, humble spirit of the true disciple of Jesus Christ. Of a verity the truth does make us free; for first of all statements as to the nature of the Supreme Being is this: "God is Truth." Before Love, or Wisdom, or

Goodness, or Law, or Omnipotence, his identity with Truth is the beginning. If, then, we have truth we have God; and the more of it, the more like him are we: free from fear, superstition, deadness, deceit, error, — free in the degree and potency of the working of that truth in us. But the love of it is the chief thing.

From a newly-made grave I hear a voice; it blends with my utterance and leads it: "Let us strive to see things as they are." It is the message of one who spoke concerning "sweetness and light;" who carried on his work of emancipating the religious mind from Philistinism, with a sincere, brave loyalty; who called us all to be "friends of the spirit," and to live in the spirit. Matthew Arnold loved truth and sought it, and led others along the noble path.

Imbued with this ardor, behold how religion gains allies of unsurpassed eminence! She marshals a fraternity of choice souls, consecrated to the unselfish service of science and humanity; the teachings of the pulpit cease to conflict with the evidences of modern thought; fellowship is determined by aim and spirit, not by shibboleth and theology; the starry names of such as Newton, Herschel, Faraday, Agassiz, Darwin, Spencer, and the host of poets, teachers, investigators, reformers, philosophers, are given proud place on the banners of the church militant. Unitarianism has ever said, and continues to say with stronger accent, that no adequate presentation of religion can be made, if the re-enforcement of modern thought, and theory, and investigation is omitted. Religion by native right claims all the truth that can be found; for with all that is obtainable, the prosecution of its work still moves feebly forward. Train your children in knowledge and accomplishments; educate them to be strong in life pursuits, but above all make them lovers of truth; out of it will spring veracity and sincerity; by it will come the elixir of perpetual

youth ; through it shall they find their best contribution to the world ; for he who loves truth despises cant and artificial conditions ; his soul is the centre of integrity, honesty and justice.

The next principle for which Unitarianism stands is *Enthusiasm for Humanity*.

By this I mean the acceptance of mankind as we find it, seeing no primeval curse on our race, deploring its vice and error, admiring its struggles toward the light, viewing all peoples past and present as children of God, quickening our faith in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man into an inspiration for the work of building the kingdom of God here in the world. Not simply a "love of souls," as the old phrase ran, but a love of men as men, a love that seeks to make salvation something realizable here and now. This enthusiasm has been manifest in Unitarian character and institutions. Our faith tends to philanthropy, to moral education, to charities of a permanent kind.

We believe in Home Missions chiefly, not because we lack humanitarian zeal, but because we have it in such abundance. The Foreign Mission work as conducted is a wasteful system, having for its object the saving of souls from future punishment. It is not a genuine form of Christ's enthusiasm for humanity. We seek to touch with his helpfulness, the sick, the poor, the ignorant, the wilful, the buffeted, and give them health, comfort, education, consecration, and peace.

We claim for this principle that it accomplishes many valuable results along religious lines. Sects have had it, and have it now, but it is obscured and impaired by restrictions, covered by theological eclipses. Given its due prominence as a cardinal element in the conduct of churches, it has this merit of beginning at the beginning. "First the natural, then that which is spiritual." Very much of the current religious method consists in begin

ning at the end, or the middle, or at some point where results are painfully unchristian. I refer to habits like the following: assuming that conversion is complete and final at some prayer-meeting; warning people that if they do not accept the Bible literally, from lid to lid, they shall surely be lost; frowning upon natural doubts and questionings as being almost the unpardonable sin; picturing the future life as a place where it may be desirable and certainly possible to disown our present noble affections and ties; stigmas cast continually on man's native traits and his original nature. These, and others, and the whole drift of the assumption of man's fall and depravity and his need of vicarious help, I earnestly deprecate, for they tend to turn the genuine love of human kind (in its natural state so real, even if intermittent) into a fictitious, feverish other-worldliness. Human life is the great commentary. Studied sympathetically, it yields to the theologian his ripest wisdom, as it has always furnished the philosopher his chief supply of truth. Human nature is the revelation of divinity, and the strong arguments of religion to-day are taken from the soul. The Unitarian entertains no effervescent enthusiasm for man; he expects to be bound by the logic of his plea, and he accepts the consequences. One is, if we have such faith in human nature we must trust reason and conscience and all the faculties. We do. We not only trust them, but we call on men to use them fearlessly and fully; to rely on them more and more, and thus train one generation after another into clearer thought, stronger ethical sense, a disciplined imagination, steadier judgment, and mightier will. It is the distrust of our right and our ability to reason and act, sown by Calvinism, that cripples Christendom. A semi-distrust, for there is a partial confidence, and a half-way exercise of our faculties in religion, since men could not be the slaves even that they are, of dogma and

superstition, without some thinking and some listening to conscience.

But let us consider another aspect of this enthusiasm for humanity. Unitarianism contends that only by this way do we effectually reach such a spiritual principle as love to God, reach it to realize it. This is only old truth, unfortunately lost along the path of historic Christianity; but Unitarianism, as a whole, is simply a return to the Founder of Christianity, and it claims an age co-eval with him. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" The difficulty of thinking of God and so apprehending him as to make the love of him real and abiding, presses upon all. He is spirit, all-diffused, infinite, how can man love a being so vast and omnipresent, in the kindling, satisfying sense of that word? Here is the solution: love humanity, work for it, enter into its joys and sorrows, be responsive to its hopes and fears, its sins and virtues, its shame and glory, and you shall find God at every turn; yea, you shall find Christ in every path coming to meet you.

This gives the church a true object, and justifies its reason for being. Churches must not be mere hospitals for the spiritually ill, or forts for theological warfare, or clubs where pew-holders enjoy fine music and essays; they must serve as centres of moral and religious activities prolonged from day to day throughout the week; their pulpits must be the seats of teachers with living messages, their pews filled with large-hearted worshippers. Religion must address itself more and more to the work of creating an environment, and less and less to the sectarian "rescue" of separate lives. It must provide institutions, foster religious training, mould society, and so uphold the continuity of influence as to make the child of each generation more responsive to religious impressions. Unitarianism emphasizes enthu-

siasm for humanity because it conduces to patriotism, and calls forth the highest types of character. He lives a mean life who is not guided by the great sentiment of love of country; and he is sure of a meagre career who fails to admire and follow the examples of the country's martyrs and leaders. This enthusiasm is pure and ennobling; it lifts our lives up into large, magnanimous outlines. Let us take courage; there is progress in the world. "The selfishness of modern times exists in defiance of morality; in ancient times it was approved, sheltered, and even in part enjoined by morality." Little by little the usage of arbitration between nations and parties enlarges its humane work; with deepened love of humanity comes the better care of the rights of children and the prevention of cruelty to our poor relations in the animal world. The "solidarity of the race" is a scientific fact, matched by the truth of the oneness in heredity of the human family. Let Christendom recognize this principle more and more, and mass its forces for a new crusade against actual tyranny, sin, and superstition!

The last of the "three things" offered by Unitarianism is *The Spirit of Jesus*.

Many creeds and churches teach and enforce this, but always with such qualifications and attachments as to render our position most needful. We ask that this shall be the supreme and final test of discipleship. We insist that the right of communion, the eligibility to church membership, the recognition of esteem, shall be governed by this searching and satisfying test. Atrocities have been perpetrated in the name of the Prince of Peace; declarations of holiness have been employed as disguises for hypocrisy; invidious and harmful distinctions have been made between the "elect" and the un-gathered; a Christian has been classified as one who accepted the doctrine that Jesus was very God. Slowly

a revolt is spreading against this baneful idea. It is fraught with as much danger to the perpetuity of Christianity as it is full of injury to the steady growth of morality. "A string of opinions," said Wesley, "is no more Christian faith than a string of beads is Christian practice." Christ-likeness is the living reproduction of his spirit, the attempt to follow his methods, to share his hope, to fill our daily orbits of duty with light and love, — not to say long prayers, or bow at the mention of his name, or deem sectarian warfare a "standing up" for him.

What surprises await the zealots of this life as they shall pass on, this world's affairs receding, and the future existence dawning? If we may judge by the plain teachings of Jesus, not those who have cried Lord! Lord! most diligently, but those who have tried to do the will of the Father, shall be called nearest to him. Am I told that the barriers are being lowered, that liberal constructions are placed on terms of fellowship, that arbitrary tests are diminishing? Yes, in certain localities where our influence has made impression; but for the most part, Christendom is in bondage to the spurious gospel of the letter, — and the letter kills. We plead for the breadth and inclusion that can come only by the spirit. Lift this principle into constant practice, and the contradictions of the texts of Scripture fall away. "The words of Jesus are of no special value except as vehicles of his spirit;" scholars have pored over his utterances to find occult prophecies, or to prove elaborate doctrines, or to substantiate the claim of his equality with Deity. The Sermon on the Mount, the parables, the Beatitudes, are unmistakably his, and are radiant with his spirit. "The prevalent feeling toward Jesus among religious men is an awful fear of his supernatural greatness, and a disposition to obey his commands, arising partly from dread of future punishment

and hope of reward, and partly from a nobler feeling of loyalty, which, however, is inspired rather by his office than his person." We need to pass by the representatives, at whose hands we so often suffer, and seek the Leader himself. Around that personality, so loving, so sacrificing, so stainless, shall group the churches and the souls aspiring. Christian unity is not feasible within purely theological bounds. Men cannot be made to think alike; they ought not to think alike; with the advance of the world goes the differentiation of types; and the manifoldness of life is sure to express itself in new denominations. Unitarianism calls attention to the only possible and desirable basis of union, that of life and work in the spirit of Jesus. It is a spirit that, judged by fair canons of criticism and estimate, is full of "sweet reasonableness;" it tends to create in human hearts the reign of buoyant obedience; it calls nothing accursed, but with heavenly sympathy turns the crude prose of trial into spiritual poetry; against the recriminative habits of the world it opposes a serene, reserved dignity and grace, born of consecration; it bids the theologian sell his controversial sword, and buy in its place the implements of the kingdom of peace and good-will; it asserts the greatness of man as a child of God, and his supremacy over institutions and days and traditions; it calls on the messengers of religion to be catholic, fraternal, self-forgetting. This spirit is congenial to true liberty and equality; it aims to hush cannon and stay the devastating work of war; wherever it finds fit scope, there arise the blessings of industry, of education, of freedom, of just laws.

Unitarianism claims to have a positive, large, loving, reverential allegiance to Jesus, and it knows no truer way of showing that loyalty than by endeavoring to make this life and spirit the central fact. We do not deem his death and the shedding of blood the principal

thing. We do not care to cross-examine seekers after the religious life as to their theories of Christ's nature, his miracles, and final ascension. It is our belief that the love of God revealed in him is commensurate with human needs at all times and in all lands. A prominent Trinitarian clergyman declared from his pulpit, in evasion of the puzzling question, "What is the fate of the heathen?" — "I do not care where they are; I do not trouble myself about dead pagans." That is not the spirit of Christ; I venture the assertion that many buric¹ peoples called heathen could show more vital religion than finds expression in such a representative of Christianity. All races, all mankind, are God's children, — infants in civilization or mature. How are we likely to appear — we so boastful of our attainments — in the eyes of our descendants five hundred years from now? The Christ-spirit includes all mankind, and judges the least-favored races the more charitably. By our light are we tried.

This struggling world of man is poorly aided by the Christian Church. Humanity asks for the bread of life and it receives stones of dogmas; it craves the "good news" of a divine friend in Jesus, — the giver of peace, the victor over troubles, the healer, — and instead obtains from "orthodox" teachers tidings of condemnation, wrath, alienation, and disgrace. The "masses" and the thinkers alike look for a highway of the Lord so plain and pleasant that nothing but their own wilfulness shall debar them from treading it; to their dismay the road of righteousness is hedged about with ecclesiastical obstacles and bristles with menaces. Average religion is pervaded with Calvin's austere temper, not with the grace and love of Jesus. Of all things most needed, this of the revival of the spirit is foremost. In its humble career Unitarianism has stood for it and will stand until its mission is finished through other and larger instru-

mentalities. It is the permanent and unchanging, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Theology must inevitably alter, conceptions of the universe shall change, modes of worship and forms of activity shall be transformed, but who can conceive of this spirit of love to God and love to man ever waning, or this type of divine humanity ever losing its leadership?

To such as may heed, Unitarianism offers these three things: the love of truth, enthusiasm for humanity, the spirit of Jesus; offers them in no narrow channels, but casts them out over literature, life, reform, and theology; hides them by trained character in the three measures of society, politics, science, or gives them free course over the land by books, tracts, and missions. Around these principles all elements of Unitarianism rally; in these tendencies exists cohesive power sufficient for our organized existence as a denomination. Let us refrain from demanding more, but let us defend these as our common inheritance. Each adherent or each church may rightfully elaborate, define, add, or formulate, within these principles; but as a body let us stand for these in their inspiring simplicity, — grand and enduring in their **very simplicity.**

The Apostles' Creed

An Analysis of its Clauses, with Reference to their Credibility. By Archibald Hopkins

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 3-4; pages, 207; price, 60 cents *net*; postage, 10 cents.

A THOROUGHLY sane, thoughtful, and discriminating examination of the Apostles' Creed, clause by clause. Although the author is evidently familiar with the theological discussions bearing on the subject, the special treatment in this volume is that of a layman applying principles of common sense, and of clear, logical, untechnical processes of thought to the problems involved. It is a fearless, sincere search after truth, without shrinking from results, and a forcible statement of conclusions and the reasons therefor. With its careful research and analysis, expressed in language wholly free from theological or philosophical terms, it is full of suggestive and stimulating thought for the ordinary reader as well as the student. The author is iconoclastic only for the purpose of becoming constructive in the end; he seeks to remove wholly the old, already crumbling structure of dogma only for the purpose of securing the foundation of a rational and more enduring religious belief. The book is, in effect, a plea for a larger, freer, intellectual outlook, and a more hopeful and inspiring religious faith than any creed can supply.

The Man Jesus

By Rev. John W. Chadwick

Size, 4 3-4 x 7; pages, 258; price, 75 cents *net*; postage, 8 cents.

A N endeavor, "with the help of many eminent scholars, to write a book which shall contribute something to a rational understanding of the human greatness of Jesus in the minds of those who have not the time or opportunity to read those voluminous writings in which the modern study of the life of Jesus has embodied its conjectures and results." The sources of information concerning Jesus and the general place and time of his career are carefully and fully examined, followed by a consideration of his youth and training, the development of his character and work. Subsequent chapters deal with Jesus as Prophet and Messiah, and finally with the questions of resurrection and deification. In simple, direct language, the grandeur of Jesus' humanity is here portrayed with warm sympathy and rare insight.

American Unitarian Association
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

UNITARIANISM:

WHAT DID IT SET OUT TO DO?

WHAT HAS IT ACCOMPLISHED?

WHAT IS ITS FUTURE?

BY

REV. E. A. HORTON.



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.” — ARTICLE I. of the *By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*

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UNITARIANISM.

“GO FORWARD.” — *Exodus*, xiv. 15.

THERE are special reasons why I treat this topic. (1) We are told that Unitarianism is dying; that in Boston, particularly, it is losing ground. This was answered recently by James Freeman Clarke, in 1870 by Dr. Bellows, in 1860 by Dr. Putnam, in 1850 by Dr. Gannett, in 1840 by Dr. Channing. It is an old, familiar cry, echoed by the thoughtless for fifty years. But at every juncture, and for every new generation, it requires attention. (2) Our young people are not so thoroughly versed in the history, facts, and genius of our faith as to see the truth and judge correctly amid these alarms. They are easily misled as to the real condition of things. They demand information. (3) There is a recurring restlessness in our body which resents the old familiar statement that Unitarianism has acted as an influence, as leaven. It is called a tame and inadequate conclusion. It is claimed that we must discard it, and that our progress depends on adopting a new standpoint of organization and denominational growth. I agree that we ought to organize more, solidify more, unite more; but I shall make my statements a defence of the familiar figure, and point out the dangers of repudiating our old methods.

Let me ask and try to answer these questions, — What did Unitarianism set out to do? What has it accomplished? What is its future?

First, then, *What did Unitarianism in New England set out to do?* It is only after a lapse of time that you can measure and explain a movement, even as to what seemed at first the clear motives and plan of the originators. There is a Providential and unconscious element in the beginnings of great causes not fully seen by the participants. The Unitarian movement had, in its inception, the appearance of a protest, a revolt against Calvinism. It argued the unity of God against the Trinity, the spirit of the Bible against the letter, love against fear. The controversies and divisions seemed to be purely theological. But that was only secondary. The doctrinal battle was but a part of the unrolling campaign. We see now that there were, in 1815 and 1820, a large number of Christians in the churches of New England who found their lives unfed by the prevalent teaching and spirit. Certain doctrines then heard every Sunday were hostile to their reason, to their instincts, to the surrounding civil institutions. The spirit of religion was not encouraging to that large, loving, fraternal life, which, as disciples of Christ, they had a desire to realize. You must remember that the most of what we call modern theory and thought had not appeared at that time. These first Unitarians did not love theological discussions in and for themselves. Nor has it ever been the desire of Unitarianism to dwell in the region of controversy. In this we are constantly misreported. All our teaching and preaching of belief has been to provide space for growth, incentives to action; freedom, not simply to think, but to think for humanity's welfare; not solely to have truth, but to use it for the glory of God and the good of man. Whether right or wrong, the fathers believed that they could not get life, and that more abundantly, from a system of doctrine constructed after the pattern of Calvinism; so they rose and attempted to "go forward" by a better way. We have never had a platform, or a formulated policy, or a

denominational creed. From the start, down to our day, the union has been one of independent societies facing the same way, and working under the guidance of these three principles: 1. The love of truth. 2. Enthusiasm for humanity. 3. The spirit of Christ. These essentials were not distinctly seen at first, but no one can deny now that they were the roots and deciding sources of the movement. Unitarianism did not set out, primarily, to create a Church. It had one, — the congregational polity; — and it kept possession of a majority of the meeting-houses in this vicinity at the time of the exciting divisions. Historically, we are the Liberal branch of the old Congregational body which fourled the colonies. Spiritually, we go back to the Apostolic days when churches were formed among the early disciples, with freedom and independence, and simple tests of membership. Unitarianism did not set out to produce an elaborate and final theology; its efforts in this direction were to simplify, to return; to trace again the lost lineaments of Jesus; to affirm the Fatherhood and Brotherhood, — above all, to ring that text from shore to shore, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Its yearning was for unity of belief in the essentials of faith, and unity of action in the building of God's kingdom on earth.

It was a positive aim. One that took no delight in needless attack or ruthless demolition. In brief, Unitarianism was an advance in theology and in practical religion. It aimed to stand for reason in religion and the rights of the intellect; but it waged a stronger contest for good works, for philanthropy, for character as God's test, for a life based on the two great commandments of love to God and love to man. In the glowing language of Dr. Bellows, "it affirmed the brotherhood of men, of races, of humanity; it called men to repentance and newness of life by a grander unfolding of the divine gift of life, of the wonders and glories that surround us

in the natural world; it displayed the gracious opportunities of glorifying God in the love and service of our day and generation. It spoke for the poor, the wronged, the ignorant, and unfortunate. It sought to arouse the human soul to a sense of its latent capacity, to haunt it with thoughts of God, to make its immortality a thing felt and known by the thrill of its aspirations. *To light by light; to God by godly ways; with Christ, in Christ's spirit; and righteousness earned, not borrowed, — earned by genuine service of God in the interest of humanity."*

I do not find, in the history of our body, that any calm leader ever expected to sweep the land and to build up a great sect. Our watchwords and methods are against it. It was against all precedent to expect denominational splendor. Liberalism in religion never was and never will be a code of belief, or an ecclesiastical structure: it is a habit of soul, an atmosphere, a spirit. It rallies by broad unifying truths; it vitalizes literature and business; it makes religion an everyday concern; it tries to bring profession and practice into greater harmony; it touches secular affairs with uplifting sympathy, and makes a sanctuary in God's temples of nature and history. It is a wise judgment, a loving hope, and a tender charity, — "life and love," as Dr. Gannett was wont to say, "life and love," forever going forward unto perfection.

Let us turn to our second question: *What has Unitarianism accomplished?*

The answer depends upon our measure and test of success. If the founders of this faith aimed for a grand church, or an intricate theology, or a revolution and destruction of old things, or a mass of adherents, then little has been realized. But for this they never struggled. Accepting my preceding statement as true, what could Unitarianism hope to achieve? I answer, only

this: to influence contemporaneous thought, to permeate other churches with liberal tendencies, to stand for certain truths and a certain life so resolutely and so clearly as to leaven the lump of modern Christianity. Its first work was to benefit the souls of those within its own churches; its next larger one, to affect the outside and contiguous sects.

What I wish to emphasize just here is not the fact that we have actually served, in the providence of God, as leaven, but to have you see that, in the nature of things, Unitarianism could have no other aim and no other hope. We have simply followed the law of history, — we have been obedient to an overruling demand. The greatest movements in history went on by the law of leaven. Beneficent reforms are not organized into success; they have a preliminary struggle of minority, despised and buffeted existence. One book may start a revolution, but the leaven of liberty has previously worked. Some may mourn our lack of vast organization; I do not. As one Whittier effects more for the brotherhood of man than a score of parliaments can do to tyrannize, so there is more radiating power in one free rational Christian than in the reiterations of a hundred conformists, organized and drilled.

I will not ask any one to take my assertion unsupported in regard to the work of Unitarianism. The Rev. Heber Newton, an Episcopalian, shall be my witness. Hear him:—

“The true work of Unitarianism is not to be studied in its Year Book, or gauged by its statistical results. . . . Its mission is to be sought in the insistent push of the thought it has quickened, and the principles it has sown through the larger bodies of orthodox Christianity. . . . It has sought to educe from the traditional formulas fresh and living conceptions, new and higher forms of the substance of all beliefs. . . . Truly, it is a noble claim for any church that its mission is to call the

various sects on to that which they all concede to be the substance of their varying forms, and to reunite them in a religion of the spirit."

All this from one not of our faith coincides with the words of Dr. Putnam: "The strength of Unitarianism lies in the diffusive power of its principles, which altogether overpass and outrun its denominational lines, and spread everywhere like an atmosphere. Unitarianism considered as a lump is very small, but considered as a leaven it is vast and omnipresent. As an organism it is feeble; as an influence it is irresistible." He adds: "There are more Unitarians, a thousand to one, outside of the Unitarian organization than inside of it."

I find in this fact—that we are leaven and not the lump—nothing that should exalt or depress us. We are simply the humble agents of great principles, destined to be the heritage of many more in the twentieth century. In this function of pioneer and advance guard, in this position of the minority, there are tribulations manifold. We must needs cheer ourselves by keeping in mind the noble past, by quickening loyalty and patience through study of our Providential history.

I do not see why other churches should exhibit feeling if we claim this position and this work. They have other and more tangible trophies; we are virtually contributing to their progress and power. By our sacrifices they are fed. In our poverty is their richness. We cut a path; they walk in it. We inaugurate a philanthropy; they enjoy it. Does the army despise the sapper and miner? No; the thoughtful ones do not. Dean Stanley comes to America to say that Theodore Parker has contributed more to theological progress than any other religious thinker of our century. Channing's works enter into the sermons and lives of thousands of Trini-

tarian ministers round the world, and they acknowledge it in private letters or public speech.

But let us be more specific. Boston has been the head-source of Unitarianism. What has been accomplished here? Remember that a great city is always the historical source of mighty movements. Rome, Athens, Constantinople, Alexandria, Geneva,—enumerate them, the starry list of central power. It is not coincidence, but cause and effect that explain certain glorious facts in the history of this city. Here “liberty, humanity, and reason” have found scope more completely than elsewhere. Reforms began here destined to make our times illustrious. Unitarianism furnished Horace Mann, Dr. Howe, John Pierpont, Garrison, Dorothea Dix, Sumner. It turned its light on history through Bancroft, Prescott, and Motley; it sent forth poets like Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes. If I were to copy a list already existing of the leaders in philanthropy, science, art, poetry, reform, statesmanship, religion, and literature, in business and life, all acknowledging from their own lips the inspiration and guidance of our faith in their careers, I should offer you a directory of illustrious names.

What has Unitarianism accomplished? It has “expressed itself in the ideal thought of Channing, the consolations and hymns of Greenwood, the tender wisdom of Ephraim Peabody;” it has done the greater part, by money and instruction, in the maintenance of Harvard University; it founded the “Benevolent Fraternity of Churches,”—the most complete mission system in any city,—and maintains it to-day with enlarged vigor. Remember that far back in 1830, when controversies were raging, the Unitarian enthusiasm for humanity came out in Tuckerman and was supported by Ware and Gannett; they labored for the poor and the unchurched. Unitarian wealth has flowed into the church treasuries of all denominations. Hardly one good enterprise has failed

to elicit response from our laity, even to the detriment of our own financial welfare.

If there is an institution in this land as unsectarian, as broad, as vigorous, as profoundly a helper to the young as the "Boston Young Men's Christian Union," I know not where it is. In its religious services all denominations join; in its membership all churches are represented. There is the "Tuckerman Circle," honorable and efficient, disbursing annual bounties. Gaze around you and behold the asylums, homes, schools, and organizations of all kinds nourished by the men and women of our faith.

New England Unitarianism is only about seventy years old. What ought we to expect in all sobriety of a movement that has served simply to leaven life, literature, theology and institutions? It has directly or indirectly, assisted to produce a Smythe, a Munger, a Bushnell, a Beecher, a Swing; a Stanley, Maurice, Brooks, Farrar. And who, to-day, stands foremost in the English-speaking world as the representative of deep reconciling views in the realm of religious thought but James Martineau, — the source of some of New England's best preaching? In our land no names more revered exist than Andrew P. Peabody and Dr. Furness, James Freeman Clarke and Dr. Hedge. No hymns more sacred and dear to all Christian hearts than those of our lyrists. No better organizations for mutual good and wide blessing are known in our country than the "Lend a Hand" clubs and "Daughters of the King" circles created by Edward Everett Hale. They are most numerous among the Trinitarian churches and are counted by hundreds. But I will not detail more. Accepting my statement that the aim of Unitarianism was to act as influence, as light, as a spirit, and that this consisted of a personal life in and by the love of truth, enthusiasm for humanity, and the spirit of Christ, — we

find for these seventy years a glorious result, a result that surpasses expectation.

Do I imply that all religious progress is due to Unitarianism? A most preposterous claim that would be; untrue and absurd. Universalism has served the same Providential purpose of influencing the world. Individual leaders have arisen here and there, sporadically. The *Zeit Geist*, or spirit of the age, that mysterious power of God, has pervaded men's sensitive minds. I am, however, dealing solely with Unitarianism, and replying to definite questions. My treatment is limited. The achievements of our church and of its faith, ought to be studied and known for encouragement and for justice. Young people grow up amid advantages, little knowing who gave them the truth, freedom, charities, humanities, progress, they enjoy. It is with no sense but gratitude that I review the past; certainly I shrink from vulgar boasting. As inspirations, I would enumerate whatever glories shine there. To prove our right to stand with our fellow-Christians, I say these things. Much have they done which we have left undone. God seems to confine bodies of Christians to distinct duties. We cannot accomplish many results within the reach of other churches, but we can be true to our past and to our future.

And this brings me to my third and last question. *What is the future of Unitarianism?*

Some Unitarian ministers say: "We have no future; our work is done; the leavening is all accomplished." Dissipate that idea if it has lodged in your mind. The advanced men of other denominations assure us it is not so; they tell us we are needed more than ever. They are right. Go west or south and behold the darkness, the spiritual bondage, the mediæval conditions.

While churches exclude good men from membership because of intellectual differences; while future everlasting punishment is depicted for heathen and sinner;

while the doctrine of total depravity is held essential; while baptism is considered a saving ordinance; while preachers dare not admit the teachings of science and history; while redemption is made to consist in profession and form; while the pure loving gospel of righteousness in Jesus, the Master, is obscured, — there is abundant need for us. Others tell us that we have always been theologians; that no more doctrine is wanted; that people crave works, — Christ-works. I answer: That living Christ, that gospel of good works we have proclaimed and humbly tried to exemplify all these seventy years. That was the original aim. Alas! we have been delinquent and languid and imperfect, as all Christians are found to be when tested by their ideals. Our progress will never come by denying the intellect or suppressing belief; a true theology is the only adequate basis of a church or of a religious movement. If I follow Christ, I necessarily have my views of his authority and mission. If I minister to my fellow-man, ill do I my service unless I have some strong thought as to his nature and needs. As I approach pain, or death, or mystery, weak am I unless my soul carries the resources of faith and hope, springing out of strong convictions. For any one to charge upon us a career of theological abstraction from actual duty, is to contradict the facts of history. We have been accused over and over of emphasizing good works and morality and character and ethical merit too much. No! there is a future for Unitarianism, but it is not to be gained by severing high and inspiring beliefs from practical Christianity. A famous foreigner once asked a prominent American, "How long do you think your Republic will endure?" Our countryman replied, "So long as the ideas of the man who founded it continue dominant." The foreigner assented. Unitarianism will have a future if we earnestly continue our methods and adhere to our original aim. It is to be

won by "going forward." Going forward intelligently; by learning of the past through our mistakes and successes. We shall be losers every way if we turn back, or go aside, or stand still, or go over, or do anything but gird ourselves with new consecration to fulfil what we have begun. This is to be done in two ways, just as the past success has come,—(1) By noble, free, faithful thinking; (2) By devoted, loving, personal action.

Those young men of the laity in our ranks are in the right who demand, not a vague and bewildering rally to do good, but a more enthusiastic use of our belief, a pushing forward of our activities, the freer handling of our churches, a breaking down of exclusiveness, a banding of the young people for missionary enterprises, an order to march all along the line.

We do not antagonize our fellow-Christians in their good works; we join them, led on by the worship and faith and influence of our own views. Take them away, and you break important mainsprings. The only way is to make our religion more vital, to display more loyalty, a greater missionary zeal, to live and act as those who have enthusiasm and consecration.

As a fact, this zeal is rising. For ten years there has been growth and awakening. The deeper the teaching and belief have sunken, the more ardent has been the denominational work. The proofs of this are in the aroused Sunday-school interest, shown in the wonderful meetings of the Sunday-School Union; in the Women's Auxiliary, constantly spreading; in the founding of the South End Industrial School, destined to leaven sections of Boston; in the planting of strong preachers in college towns, moulding the students; in the creation of the Boston Unitarian Club, and its erection of our headquarters; in the organizing of similar clubs at various places; in the wide work of the Post-Office Mission, with hundreds

of correspondents all over the country seeking light and aid ; in the rise of new societies throughout New England ; in the gift from a Methodist of Morgan Chapel to Unitarian care and guidance ; in the better adjustment and prosecution of our education of the Indians and Negroes ; in the establishment and success of a National Conference ; in the network of local conferences all over the land ; in the new Temperance Society ; in the popular theatre meetings, planned to reach the churchless ; in the young people's meetings, so successful for several seasons ; in the creation of a Building-Loan Fund for young churches ; in the fact, so cheering yet so dismaying, that the demand for Unitarian preaching far outruns the supply (what we need most imperatively is a filling of the Divinity Schools with students) ; in the ardor and consecration of our young ministers. All this is a part of our present condition created within ten or fifteen years, and it points to greater things.

Our dangers are many ; some of them I fear, others I do not. I fear the self-satisfaction of the average Unitarian, his complacent ease in Zion. He sitteth in the seat of the scornful, and looks down on other churches. I fear the thoughtless Unitarian, who is easily carried about by every wind of taste or social current, devoid of convictions or zeal. I fear the idle Unitarian, who is willing that others should do all the work if only the choir will sing well and the preacher deliver pleasing sermons. I fear the gazing Unitarian, who looks over the churches and is all the time distressed because other denominations are so full and have numerical power, forgetting that quantity is not everything ; he is full of panics and forebodings. The influence of such on the future I fear. But I am not afraid of the earnest though doubting Unitarian ; he will come into faith. I shrink not from the possibility of seeing our movement blend

in new orthodoxy, or some advanced and comprehensive form of religion. It will not come for a long time; and if it does, all glory be to God and his truth that we were permitted to have our part. I am not troubled by the prevalent statements as to the decadence of Unitarianism in Boston because a church or two is affected by changes of population. Other denominations have suffered more than we in this way, as you may see by reading the history of our city. The fact remains, that there are more Unitarians gathered in churches this day, of Boston and vicinity, than at any time these past twenty-five years. A brother minister of the Trinitarian faith has publicly said that it is proof enough to him of the decline of Liberalism that his church is full and prosperous, while Theodore Parker's church is extinct. Such condensed argument will hardly do. Certain causes operated to dismember the Twenty-eighth Congregational Church; but Parker's soul goes marching on, and his people are everywhere. We cannot put a bushel of spiritual power into a peck measure of organization.

I do not fear anything but those elements within our body that conduce to lethargy. We shall always abide on the Christian basis; I fear not the efforts of a few to remove our rootage to a different soil. Let us "go forward." We have not improved our opportunities; we are needlessly dubious; there is yet chance to do more and better work. "The one great opportunity of American Unitarianism is to make itself the foremost representative of that spiritual religion which is yet to be the religion of thoughtful, earnest, aspiring souls." It will offer a theistic science to thinkers, a rational theology to believers, a consecrating spirit to worshippers, a reasonable service to workers. The love of truth, enthusiasm for humanity, the spirit of Christ, — these shall lead us on. Unitarianism is not for the few in its final application and blessing, but for the many. It is for the

world. Let us love it, live it, and teach it. Be ours the noble effort so to carry on our cause that we may be fraternal in our fellowship with other churches, zealous of good works, guardians of religious freedom, a true branch of the Church of Christ.

UNITARIANISM.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

BY REV. FREDERICK B. MOTT.

Unitarianism means :

GOD.	The Universal Father, living, acting, loving.
RELIGION.	Obedience to the voice of God.
CHRIST.	The brightest example of God's holy spirit working in man.
BIBLE.	Record of a nation hearkening to the voice of God.
HUMANITY.	Ungrowing and immortal, though still incomplete.
CHARACTER.	Life purified by love.
WORSHIP.	Personal contact with God.
SERVICE.	To do good the supreme purpose of life.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

WHAT DOES UNITARIANISM MEAN?

Unitarianism means : God.

The Universal Father, ever loving, ever able, ever ready, calls us through the call of duty, reproves us through suffering and remorse, comforts us through the instinct of faith. These are the tones of His voice, — voice of the Universal Father, ever loving and ever ready, ever caring for every child.

Unitarianism means : Religion.

Obedience to the voice of God, — to the whisperings of the holy spirit heard at first hand or the depth of our own hearts.

Unitarianism means : Christ.

Discipleship to Jesus Christ, as to the brightest manifestation of this holy spirit of God working in man, showing life lived as God would have all life lived. As our religious Master, we gather together "In His Name."

Unitarianism means : **Bible.**

A real reverence for the Bible, as a storehouse of religious help,—the most complete record of a nation hearkening to the voice of God to be found in any literature. So to be profoundly studied and used.

Unitarianism means : **Humanity.**

A real reverence for human nature, as for an incomplete but upgrowing childhood. Born of God's love, humanity grows steadily year by year to better things, and is immortal because it's life is the breath of God's own spirit.

Unitarianism means : **Character.**

Love ruling and controlling the motives of life, so as to conquer sin, and make the heart pure. This the only way of salvation.

Unitarianism means : **Worship.**

Much more than an act of devotion, a veritable spiritual greeting, a personal contact with God.

Unitarianism means : **Service.**

Lifting the burdens of the weak, cheering the sorrowing, giving rest to the weary. To do good the supreme purpose of life.

A LAYMAN'S ANSWER
TO THE QUESTION,
“WHAT DO UNITARIANS BELIEVE?”
BY G. Q. COLTON.

THIS question is often asked.

Well, we believe about as much as other denominations; but we do not formulate our belief into a creed, because we expect to know more fifty years hence than we do to-day. We are learners in the school of Christ, and shall always remain learners.

We believe it to be presumptuous to require submission to a creed which binds us down for all time to our present knowledge. Such creed is an assumption of all knowledge, past, present, and to come, on the subject treated, and is lacking in the first element of wisdom, — modesty.

No two men do, or can, think alike. A creed, when first written, expresses the opinion of only one man, — the author. It is then discussed, modified, altered; and, when finally adopted, expresses

the opinion of no one man. At best, it is but a compromise.

We believe in keeping our minds open to receive light from any and all sources, and to modify and change our belief according as new light is obtained. Growth is an evidence of life; anything that does not grow and change is dead.

We believe in the divinity, but not in the deity, of Jesus Christ, — in the divinity of his life, character, and mission. But this divinity was derived from God. Christ said, “All power is *given* unto me.” “I can of mine own self do nothing.” He also said, “I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God.” A father and son cannot be one and the same. All mere theories about Christ, his nature, origin, and oneness with the Father, are incomprehensible, and therefore valueless. Saint Paul said, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

We believe that, to be a Christian, one must be a follower of Christ, and try to live according to the precepts and example he set. It is the possession of the *spirit* of Christ that constitutes a man a Christian.

We believe that *goodness* and Christianity, or a Christ-like spirit, are synonymous. Therefore that every really good man is a Christian, whether he professes Christianity and belongs to a church or not. He possesses Christ's spirit.

We believe that goodness and happiness go hand in hand, and constitute heaven here and hereafter. We believe there is a spark of divinity in even the worst of men, and if touched aright, can be made to blaze, and in time illuminate the whole man. This spark is divine, and is from God. Therefore the doctrine of total depravity cannot be true.

We believe that absolute knowledge of truth on *any* subject only exists with God. The degree of knowledge a man may attain, like cold and heat, is comparative. Even Christ did not profess to know *everything*. Did he not say, "But of that day and of that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father only"?

The Rev. Dr. Phillips Brooks once said, in a sermon delivered in New York, that "A man's *character* at death determines the place to which he will go."

Free moral agency is fundamental in the Christian system. A man *can* and *does* form his own character. He would not be responsible were it not so. This power belongs to the spirit, and was given by the Creator to be exercised.

As an inevitable consequence of the exercise of this free will, there must result a regular gradation of moral character among men, from the highest to the lowest. There is "a great gulf" between heaven and hell; and in this life there is "a great gulf" between very good men and very bad men.

But every thinking person knows that between these two extremes there is every variety of moral character, — a regular gradation from top to bottom. Would it be just in God (according to popular teaching) to take the upper half, or the upper third, of this column up into heaven, and send all below down to hell? And this in face of the fact that there is but a shade of difference in character between the lowest that go up and the highest that go down! Heaven is not attained by a theological technicality, but by character. We do not “get” religion, but religion must get us.

Every free-will act of a man's life goes toward the formation of his moral character; and this character determines the amount of happiness or unhappiness he will possess, here and hereafter; so that, in a sense, a man makes his own heaven or hell.

This line of thought, that we are free moral agents, and answerable for our conduct, runs through the entire Scriptures, while not a word is uttered that we shall ever be called to account for our doctrinal beliefs. Doctrines are of no value, save as guides to conduct.

Is this “free will,” this “spiritual power,” destroyed by the death of the body? No. Only the material body dies. This “self-willing” and “spiritual power” *must* live after death, and can be exercised.

We believe that God's government is paternal, disciplinary, and corrective. If I put my finger in the

fire, I am burned, and it is best for me that I should be burned. If I break a moral law, I suffer, and it is best for me. In this way God teaches me to obey, and brings me back to obedience and blessedness.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

The Prodigal Son never wandered beyond the reach of his father's love. His suffering was self-inflicted. His father's arms were always open to receive him. In just this attitude God stands toward all His erring children, and will stand through time and eternity.

While the government of God is paternal, it is also the perfection of justice. Every sin is noted, and receives its just award. There is no escape from the consequences of sin. In the play of "Hamlet," Shakespeare puts these words into the mouth of the *King*:—

"In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling; there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence."

The moral, as well as the material world, is governed by fixed laws; and the operation of these laws is never suspended. Suffering in this world and the world to come will continue as long as sin, and no longer. The duration of this life is but as a flash of lightning, compared with eternity. Do sins committed in this flash of lightning deserve an eternity of suffering? Justice demands that the length and severity of punishment should be measured by the offence committed. Will not God's justice be satisfied with something a little less than eternity?

We believe that heaven and hell are not two *places*, one of perfect happiness, the other of perfect misery; but that they are *moral states of being*; and that every one at death goes into that state for which his moral character has fitted him. This, and this alone, is absolute justice.

We believe that in the final judgment no questions will be asked as to what church you belonged, or what faith you professed; but the questions will be, "What have you done? What is the character you have brought with you? Did you do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God?" The answer to these questions will determine the place to which you will go.

At this great tribunal all dogmas, confessions, and creeds will sink into nothingness. Only "the pure in heart shall see God?" "For God shall bring every *work* into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, . . . that they may rest from their labors ; and their *works* do follow them," — not their creeds, confessions, or theological opinions.

We do *not* believe that a career of wickedness, a life black with sin, can be wiped out and made white by repentance an hour before death. Repentance is but the beginning, the first step in the growth and attainment of a Christian character.

We believe in the necessity of a change of heart. But what *is* a change of heart? Is it some mysterious, sudden, inward emotion or experience, by which the whole man is instantly made over from a sinner into a saint? No. Christianity is the growth of a Christ-like spirit in the soul. The change we believe in is an intelligent exercise of the whole *mind*, *purpose*, and *will* to take Christ for our example, and a determination to lead a better life. This change may, and often does, have a sudden b̀eginning ; but its development and growth require time. Saint Paul called the new converts "babes in Christ," and "fed them with milk, and not with strong meat." This change is very great, and may properly be called "a new birth" ; but there is nothing incomprehensible or supernatural about it.

We believe in church organization and fellowship, the main object being for mutual help. We attend church, not expecting thereby to be saved, but to help save one another. Trees in the forest stand firm because they have support all around. Take

away this support from any one tree, and the wind would blow it over. We go to hear preaching that our moral sensibilities may be awakened and stimulated, and for an incitement to better living.

We believe there are good Christians in all denominations, — persons striving to do their duty according to the light they possess, yet that none are free from doctrinal errors. We do not claim this for ourselves. Perfection does not belong to humanity. But errors in judgment are not sins. God looks only at the heart. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

In the foregoing I have endeavored to set forth — very imperfectly, I am aware — *some* of the ideas which we Unitarians entertain. We do not all think alike. In all these things we exercise and allow the largest liberty. Mere belief has little to do in the formation of Christian character.

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THE GROWTH
OF
LIBERAL AND TRUE RELIGIOUS
THOUGHT

*AS SEEN IN THE WRITINGS OF
IAN MACLAREN*

BY
REV. ALBERT WALKLEY



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

THE GROWTH OF LIBERAL AND TRUE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AS SEEN IN THE WRITINGS OF IAN MACLAREN.

SOME time ago a volume of sermons by Scotch ministers appeared, which showed that out of old and hard Calvinism a gentler, sweeter life was rising. That volume made us feel that the Scot had a warm, feeling heart underneath his rugged and stern creed. There is in him a good deal of Robert Burns as well as of John Knox. Of late this Scot has been occupying a large place in the mind of the religious world. The stories of George MacDonald made manifest the sweeter life in old Scotland's forbidding religion. And now Barrie and Lyall touch the same chord, and the many hands play the same tune of gentleness, and bring home the truth that not only of one blood, but of one heart, hath God made all nations of men.

One name at this day takes up a large part of the world's attention. He is a minister of the gospel, who writes not only sermons but stories, all, however, on the same theme, — the religion of Jesus. John Watson, or Ian Maclaren, as he calls himself, is

a sign of the times. It has been his good fortune to be an incarnation of the new life that has come out of old Calvinism.

His sermons are not at all such as the fathers would or could in good conscience have preached. In his last story—"Kate Carnegie"—he gives us a picture of one of the older ministers, who was compelled by his whole noble life to preach the old doctrine of God's wrath and election. Rabbi Sanderson, as they called him, had to preach that God was an exacting judge, whose inflexible justice demanded the damnation of some. It was not because the dear old saint wished to preach such stern truth that he did it, but because he had to. He felt that woe was he if he preached another gospel. But out of this obedience to conscience grew in time a fuller, sweeter light. We honor the men who through sorrow and tears obeyed their consciences, even if they seem to us terrible in their loyalty to those consciences. The reward is seen in the glorious religion which has arisen on our times. At the heart of old Calvinism was the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. But, says the modern, the centre of that sovereignty is love, not wrath. And this has lighted up the whole doctrine with grace and beauty.

The modern minister turns more to Jesus than to Paul or Calvin. He has less to do with the fall of Adam, and more to do with the Sermon on the Mount. In one of his

stories Maclaren tells of a young man who was to preach his first sermon to a people who had called him to become their minister. He must preach, of course, a great and learned sermon. But the thoughts would not come, the pen would not write as it ought to. There was no warmth to the sermon he had, and he felt it. His aunt saw his perplexity, and called to mind for him the last words of his mother, who had passed into the upper light some five years before: "If God calls ye to the ministry, ye'll no refuse, an' the first day ye preach in yir ain kirk, speak a gude word for Jesus Christ. An', John, I'll hear ye that day though ye'll no see me, and I'll be satisfied." He burned the written sermon, and went into his pulpit with a heart filled with the memory of his mother and a love for Jesus; and he preached one of those sermons that get not into print, but into lives forever and forever.

This loyalty to Jesus marks Ian Maclaren's thought, and all our liberal religious thought. In his prose work, "The Mind of the Master," he says: "When one reads the creed which was given by Jesus, and those which have been made by Christians, he cannot fail to detect an immense difference. . . . They all have a likeness to each other, and a family unlikeness to the Sermon on the Mount. . . . What must strike every person about Jesus' sermon is that it is not

metaphysical, but ethical. What he lays stress upon are such points as these: the Fatherhood of God over the human family; his perpetual and beneficent providence over all his children; the excellence of simple trust in God over the earthly care of this world; the obligation of God's children to be like their Father in heaven; the paramount importance of true and holy motives; the worthlessness of a merely formal righteousness; forgiveness dependent on our forgiving our neighbor; the fulfilling of the law of love; and the play of tender and passive virtues."

Around the Sermon on the Mount gathers all the religious thought of this man who is touching the modern mind and heart. He almost grows monotonous — if such a thing be possible — in his repetitions of loyalty to this highest standard of religious thought. He puts his creed in a short form, full of Christ, full of tenderness, full of hope and sympathy, which runs thus: "I believe in the Fatherhood of God; I believe in the words of Jesus; I believe in a clean heart; I believe in the service of God; I believe in the unworldly life; I promise to trust God and follow Christ, to forgive my enemies, and to seek after the righteousness of God." The religious papers of the sterner creeds tell us that this is no creed at all, that it is "worthless as a creed in honor of Christ."

Nevertheless, it is around this creed, or one like it, that the hearts of men gather. It is this creed that is moulding men into gentler and nobler forms. It is this creed that is giving consolation in hours of sorrow. It is this creed that is putting new life into the Church and winning men's adhesion to the Church. It is this creed that is making us see God in all noble men whose lives are given in work for their fellows. Such a creed compels us to honor the intellect, and also to give place to the heart. It is compelling us to judge God not so much by the laws of old Rome or the common law of England as by the tender life he has himself planted in each human heart.

In the parish of Drumtochty was one Lachlan Campbell - a Grand Inquisitor - whose opinion "neither minister nor people could lightly disregard." He stood for "sound doctrine," and sound doctrine with him was the old Puritan kind. The minister was a young man with a love in his heart for Christ and man and the great beautiful world about. At times he would give his people a sermon which he hoped might awaken in them a love for nature, might help them see God's lessons of hope and comfort in the trees and skies. To Lachlan Campbell, in these sermons "there wass nothing right, for I am not thinking that trees and leaves and stubble fields will save souls, and I did not hear about sin and

repentance and the work of Christ. It iss sound doctrine that we need, and a great peety you are not giving it." "I am not liking his doctrine," said the grand inquisitor, "and I wass thinking that some day there would be no original sin in the parish of Drumtochty."

When the minister undertook to preach about the higher criticism, Lachlan thought, "It iss not goot to meddle with Moses," and he and the minister had a falling out. He was dreaded by the young people who came for examination in their Bible and catechism. Yet in that stern old Scot, wrapped in many hard crusts of Calvinism, was a true, warm heart; and the time came when it was revealed. His daughter Flora went astray, and left him, and went to the great city of London. Her father mourned for her, yet in obedience to his sense of duty he blotted her name out of the family Bible, and would have blotted it out of the church book. But the thought was brought home to him how it would do if God were to blot our names out of the book of life for our sins. His sorrow took off the husks which hid his heart, and in time the real, true man came forth. He came to learn that God was a God of mercy and of plenteous redemption, that like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord doth pity. When his daughter returned a penitent she found, not the cold Calvinist, but the Christlike Chris-

tian. And so warm was the old man's welcome that she said to a friend, "It iss a peety you hef not the Gaelic; it iss the best of all languages for loving. There are fifty words for 'darling,' and my father would be calling me every one that night I came home."

In this same parish was one Marget Howe. She was the best woman in the parish, — so full of love and yet so full of honest common-sense. It was she who had helped Lachlan Campbell to ripen into real Christian faith and love. Maclaren gives us a few glimpses into her life, and in them we see the new and loving theology which is replacing that of the days gone. She had a son, George by name. He was "a lad o' pairts;" the dominie was proud of him; he was sent to the University of Edinburgh, where he gained honors; he was destined for the ministry, and was made ready for it. All was fair of promise; for honors had fallen thick and fast on the young man from Drumtochty. But a wise and good God planned otherwise. The young man came home to die. One day he was sitting, wrapped in his plaid, outside beside the brier bush. His mother was in the parlor with one of those good-hearted but wrong-headed neighbors who come to comfort those who are beyond them. This neighbor, Kristy Stewart, would warn Mrs. Howe with the consoling thought that "it's an

awfu' lesson, Marget, no to mak' idols o' our bairns, for that 's naethin' else than provokin' the Almichty." Marget Howe knew God better than that, and so replied: "Did ye say the Almichty? I'm thinkin' that 's ower grand a name for your God, Kristy. What wud ye think o' a faither that brocht hame some bonnie thing frae the fair for ane o' his bairns, and when the puir bairn wes pleased wi' it, tore it oot o' his hand and flung it into the fire? Eh, woman, he wud be a meeserable, cankered, jealous body. Kristy, wumman, when the Almichty sees a mither bound up in her laddie, I tell ye he is sair pleased in his heaven, for mind ye hoo he loved his ain son. Besides, a'm judgin' that nane of us can love anither withoot lovin' Him." The son heard all this conversation, though the mother did not intend he should. And when she saw that the window was open, she said, —

"I didna ken."

"Never mind, mither, there 's nae secrets atween us; and it gar'd my heart leap to hear ye speak up like yon for God."

Then he told her where and how he got his first real idea of a good God. He asked her if she did not remember the night, when he was a boy, he called to her in fright; for he could not sleep, so terrified was he by a sermon he had heard on hell.

"Ye hae na forgotten, mither, the fricht that was on me that nicht?"

"Never," said Marget; "and never can."

"Ye asked me, 'Am I a guid mother tae ye?' And when I could do naethin' but hold, ye said, 'Be sure God maun be a hantle kinder.' The truth came to me as with a flicker, and I cuddled down into my bed, and fell asleep in His love as in my mother's arms."

In our liberal and modern theology we mark the triumph of the pure and noble heart. It sees in God, not less than the tenderest human love, but infinitely more. And well does Maclaren make "the Fatherhood of God the final idea of God." "One," says he, "is aghast to discover that the doctrine which Jesus put in the fore-front of his teachings, and labored at with such earnestness, did not leave a trace on the dominant theology of the early Church." But now this doctrine is coming to the front place, and coming to inspire, to cheer, to give hope, to lighten the burdens of life here, and to shed floods of light upon the world to come.

Among the very best of Maclaren's essays in his book, "The Mind of the Master," is one on the "Sovereignty of Character." In this he says that "there is nothing in which we differ so hopelessly as creed, nothing on which we agree so utterly as character. Impanel twenty men of clean conscience and average intelligence, and ask them to try some person by his opinions, and they may

as well be discharged at once. . . . Ask them to bring in the standard of conduct, and they will bring in a verdict in five minutes. . . . Just as he approximates to the Beatitudes they will pronounce the man good; just as he diverges they will declare him less than good."

This truth is emphasized in the very best story Maclaren has yet written. It is a short story of five chapters, and about a doctor of the old school. The theologians of a school which is fast passing away object to this story and condemn it as a sugar-coated pill calculated to deceive and ruin people. But its beauty, pathos, and truthfulness win our hearts and minds. And we accept the testimony of the hearts which God himself has made rather than of the creeds which metaphysically demented men have made. The name of this old practitioner was William MacLure,—no man of smooth words, of finest manners, no great professor of religion; nor was he as steady in church-going as he himself admits he ought to have been. The brightest woman of the parish said of him that he was a kind heart, "though o' course he has faults like us a', an' he disna tribble the kirk often." His one enemy in the parish found fault with him, on the same line, that "it was a peety he didna mak' mair profession o' religion." But no man in the parish was less appreciative of the noble qualities of the

doctor than was he himself. When dying, with his friend Drumsheugh by his bedside, he summed himself up:—

“It wesna easy for me tae get tae kirk, but a’ cud hae managed wi’ a stretch, an’ a’ used langidge a’ sudna, an’ a’ micht hae been gentler, an’ no been so short in temper. A’ see’t a’ noo.”

But this was not the estimate put upon his life and work by the people who knew him. He was the only man in the parish who did not know “that he’d githered mair luvè than any man in the Glen.” The people whose diseases he had healed, whose children, wives, and husbands he had rescued from death, looked on him as the one who “had a share in a’ body’s grief, an’ carried the heaviest wecht in a’ the Glen.”

The prayers of people and minister together went up for “the beloved physician,” that God might “wonderfully bless his skill.”

Now, what is objected to by the stricter sort is not that Maclaren praises this man of medicine, but that he should give him a place in the land of the blessed. Those of the stricter way hold that only through Jesus Christ, who died and bore our sins on the cross, have we any claim on God for mercy. Good works and kind deeds must not open bliss hereafter. Now this story of the new theology not only praises the old doctor for his deeds of love and sym-

pathy, but takes us to his death-bed and makes us see the gates beyond open to their full width to welcome this rough man of the Scottish glen to the full bliss of God's "Well done, good and faithful servant." With Drumsheugh, his friend, we sit by the bed of this dying Good Samaritan. He asks Drumsheugh to read him a bit out of his mother's Bible. Drumsheugh takes the Bible and says he 'll read a word his own mother used to like, — "In my Father's house are many mansions"; but the doctor stops him. "It's a bonnie word, an' yer mither wes a sanct; but it's no for the like o' me. It's ower gude; a' daurna tak it. Shut the buik an' let it open itsel, an' ye'll get a bit a've been readin' every nicht the laist month." The book opened to the parable of the publican and the Pharisee, which Drumsheugh read. The words, "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote his breast saying, God be merciful to me a sinner," pleased the doctor.

"That nicht hae been written for me."

Then follows a prayer that gives our modern theology, our new faith in God, our new, fuller love for him and our strong confidence in his love for us. The doctor asked Drumsheugh to pray, which he did.

"Almighty God . . . dinna be hard on Weelum MacLure, for he's no been hard wi' ony body in Drumtochty. . . . Be kind

tae him as he's been tae us a' for forty year . . . We're a' sinners afore Thee . . . Forgive him what he's dune wrang, an' dinna cuist it up to him . . . Mind the fouk he's helpit . . . the weemen an' bairnes . . . an' gie him a welcome hame, for he's sair needin't after a' his wark. . . . Amen."

Thinking of his patients and of his work, thinking of his mother and his boyhood, he passed away. This man would be excluded from heaven by the old theology. And, indeed, the many comments by some of the church papers of our day do exclude him from a world of hope and of love beyond. The older thought, born of some of Paul's rabbinical sayings, of St. Augustine's "Confessions" which are saturated with the stern spirit of Roman law, of Calvin, who thought most of man as a sinner rather than as a child of God, — this old theology condemns such a picture as that given us in this story of the doctor as irreligious and harmful. There is no thought of atonement in it, no redeeming blood of Christ, no scheme of salvation. But it is filled with the spirit of the Good Samaritan, filled with the spirit of Christ, filled with the love of a Heavenly Father. We thank God for this new light and life. We rejoice in it. We bring our tribute of tears to the old doctor's death bed; and we feel that the man who finds no room in heaven for such as this man, who did his best for "the puir bodies" of our suf-

fering humanity, will find little room there for himself.

It is when one puts some of the older books, older sermons, and older religious stories alongside these stories of Maclaren's that we see the blessed change which has come over our religious thought. "Pilgrim's Progress," a wonderful book, gives us one phase of religion,—the old Puritan phase; these stories of "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush" give us another,—the new Christian phase. It is a great change; and thank God for that change!

WHAT DO UNITARIANS BELIEVE?

A Statement

BY

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND, M.A.



A. AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

WHAT DO UNITARIANS BELIEVE?

For the purpose of rendering, if I may, some little assistance to the large number of persons all about us, who are asking the above question, as well as with the hope, possibly, of stirring up others still, who have not yet done so, to inquire, I have prepared the following brief summary of information regarding the principles and positions of Unitarians.

FREEDOM OF INQUIRY IN RELIGION.—We believe that the same God who is the author of religion, is also the author of reason; that there is no other way in which truth can possibly be separated from error in religion except by investigation and the use of reason; and therefore, that it is of the highest importance that there should be everywhere the freest and fullest inquiry with reference to religious things,—in this inquiry every man being permitted to stand upon his own feet, and to judge for himself, subject to no dictation or pressure from councils, synods, conferences, presbyteries, creeds, catechisms, fathers of the church, doctors of the church, or preachers.

NO CREED—We have no creed, that is, no authoritative statement of beliefs which persons are required to subscribe to; first, because we believe to the fullest extent in liberty of thought, and would do nothing to check it; secondly, because, in the very nature of the case, it is impossible for any two per-

sons to see truth exactly alike, and therefore a creed made by one man for another must be more or less inadequate if not false; thirdly, because if we had a creed fitted to our wants to-day, we should either have to stop growing in knowledge and insight or else get a new one to-morrow; fourthly, because neither Jesus nor the Apostles taught any, nor did the early church possess any; fifthly, because history gives unmistakable proof that creeds and authoritative statements of doctrine have always tended to tear the Christian church to pieces, to multiply sects, to suggest and foster persecutions, and to hinder progress.

SOMETHING BETTER.—But while we have no creed or fixed statement of doctrine which we prescribe as a condition of Christian fellowship, we *do* have a *great, central principle*, and a *few great, simple, central faiths*. Our central principle is this: the necessary harmony of true religion with reason, or the supreme authority of reason and moral consciousness in the search after religious truth. From this fundamental principle, everywhere held to among us, has resulted an essential agreement as to the general, fundamental faiths upon which our movement builds—an agreement probably quite as great as can be found in churches which have authoritative creeds.

GOD.—We believe God to be one, not three or more; an intelligent First Cause, not an ultimate blind force; beyond our utmost thought powerful, wise, holy, just, good, not malignant, or indifferent,

or in any way imperfect; the embodiment of all, and more than all, that we can possibly mean by that name which Jesus taught us to call him, "our Father," and hence one who can never cease to love and care for all his children, in this world or any other.

INSPIRATION.—We believe that inspiration is not something which can be locked up in writing, or confined to any age or people; but that now, to-day, and here with us, just as truly as 2,000 or 3,000 year ago and in Palestine, the Infinite Spirit of Wisdom, Truth, Beauty and Love, waits to come with its inspiration into every receptive mind.

REVELATION.—We believe that revelation is progressive, not stationary; that it is of all times, countries and races, not of the remote past or of a single people only; that it comes through many channels, including nature, history and the mind of man, not through any single channel alone, or in any miraculous way; that, so far from revelation being confined to one book, all moral and spiritual truth known to man belongs to it; that as a race we are now standing only in the morning dawn of revelation, not in its evening twilight.

THE BIBLE.—We believe that the Bible is the greatest, the most influential, the most important, the noblest depository of this revelation that has come down to us from the past, and is therefore to be prized by us as the most precious and sacred of books; though not as the only sacred book of the world, nor by any means an infallible book.

JESUS.—Accepting the Bible teaching that all

men are "sons of God," we yet believe that Jesus, by reason of the exceptional purity and perfectness of his character, was pre-eminently what the New Testament in a number of places calls him, *the son of God*. We believe him to have been divine, but not Deity,—as we believe that humanity, in the degree of its perfection is everywhere divine. We teach tender love and earnest reverence toward him, but we do not worship him, because, among other reasons, he himself, both by word and example, taught us to worship only God—his Father and ours.

COMING TO JESUS.—While we believe that no words in our day are more often used among certain large classes of religious people, in a sense which has in it *no sense*, but is mere sentimentalism and cant, we at the same time most sincerely believe in a real coming to Jesus;—that is, a coming (through study and reflection and effort) to a constantly more and more perfect imitation of, or conformity to, his pure and exalted spirit and life.

BELIEVING IN JESUS.—Believing in Jesus we do not understand to consist in believing any speculative theological doctrines *about* him,—as his incarnation, his deity, his atonement, his relation to a trinity. True believing in Jesus we understand to consist in believing in *him*,—in what he was and did, in the kind of life he lived and character he exhibited ; in such love to God and man, such devotion to truth and duty, such beautiful self-sacrifice, such patience and gentleness, such bravery and fidelity, as he everywhere taught and exemplified.

FOLLOWING CHRIST.—We believe that the truest following of Christ is to go about doing good.

CONVERSION.—The word “convert” means “to turn,” or “to turn about.” Inasmuch, therefore, as all men, being imperfect, are liable to commit errors, and fall to walking in ways that are not right, we believe that all men have need to be converted, not once but again and again.

THE NEW BIRTH.—We believe that to be born again, and to continue to be born again, into new and perpetually new, into finer and higher and forevermore finer and higher spiritual life, is what Jesus taught to be the law of our being, and the design of the Creator for all men.

SALVATION.—We believe in salvation by character, not salvation by purchase or transfer ; and that Jesus saves men solely by helping them to become better, not by vicariously atoning for their sins.

The whole idea, in all its forms, that God, before he can or will pardon men’s sins, must have some third party to make him willing, or some sort of “plan” or “scheme,” whereby he becomes able to pardon, we utterly reject. We believe that God’s paternity is real, and not a mere pretense of paternity, and therefore that the moment any human child of his manifests sincere penitence and seeks forgiveness of his sin, God freely and joyfully forgives—without any thought, ever, of requiring first the suffering of an innocent person in the place of the guilty. In our reading of the Parable of the Prodigal Son—that part of the teaching of Jesus in which

he illustrates most fully God's dealing with his erring children—we find the father represented as running to meet the penitent son "while he was yet a great way off"; and we do not find even a hint that the elder brother, who had not sinned, was required first to make an "atonement" for the younger, or to "intercede" for him, or to "satisfy justice," or to "propitiate" the father, or do anything in any way to promote the father's willingness or ability to forgive.

THE GUILT OF THE RACE FOR ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION.—We believe that nobody can be guilty for anybody's sin but his own.

GOOD AND EVIL.—We believe that the world is not fallen, but incomplete; and that, in the nature of things, evil is transient and good eternal.

HUMAN NATURE.—We believe that human nature is imperfect but not inherently bad; that it has been wisely appointed to man to rise by slow degrees and long and even painful effort out of low conditions into conditions ever higher and better, and not that we are the degenerate descendants of pure and perfect ancestors in some remote past. We believe that the race as a whole occupies a higher plane to-day than ever before, and that this progress of the past gives us ground for faith in a greatly increased progress in the future.

RETRIBUTION.—We believe that no wrong-doing will go unpunished, and no right-doing unrewarded; that all punishment for sin is natural, not arbitrary, reformatory in its aim, not vindictive, and

therefore cannot, in the nature of things, be everlasting.

HEAVEN AND HELL.—The doctrine of an eternal hell we unqualifiedly reject, as the foulest imputation upon the character of God possible to be conceived, and as something which would render happiness in heaven itself impossible, since no beings whose hearts were not stone, could be happy anywhere knowing that half the human family, including many of their own loved ones, were in torments. Instead of such a dark and God-dishonoring doctrine, we believe that the future existence will be one ruled by Eternal Justice and Love, that he whom in this world we call "our Father," will be no less a Father to all his human children in the world to come, and that that world will be so planned as not only to bring eternal good to all who have done well here, but also to offer eternal hope to such as have done ill here.

FAITH AND WORKS.—We believe in faith:—faith in God, faith in man, faith in truth, faith in duty; and that all these faiths are "saving faiths." We believe in works:—that the more good works a man does, so that his motives be good, the better pleasing to heaven is his life; and that no salvation of any worth ever comes to any human being except through faithful and earnest work.

WORSHIP, LOVE AND SERVICE OF GOD.—We believe that man is as much made to worship as to think; but, that perfect worship of God includes reverence for everything high and pure in humanity;

that perfect love of God includes love to all God's children; that he best serves God who is most useful, and who obeys best every law of his being—physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.—We believe that the true basis of church membership and all Christian fellowship, is not an intellectual belief of formulated creeds or articles of faith, but a sincere desire to unite for a common purpose of Christian worship, moral culture and human helpfulness.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION.—We believe that science and religion, having the same author, can never, by any possibility be antagonistic; but that true religion is scientific and true science is religious. We cheerfully acknowledge that science has already been of incalculable service to religion, in helping to rid it of many degrading and hurtful superstitions and errors; and we bid all scientific investigators a most sincere god-speed in any and every investigation which can throw light upon any of the great religious questions of the time.

FELLOWSHIP OF RELIGIONS.—While we believe that Christianity is the highest and best religion of the world, we believe also that the other great religions of mankind have in them much that is true and of God; and that God, instead of having arbitrarily chosen out one single people and made it the sole channel of his communication with the race, leaving the rest in midnight darkness, "has not left himself without witness" among any people, and that "in every nation he that feareth

God and worketh righteousness (according to the best light he has) is accepted with God."

THE ABOVE.—The above, while not a creed, or authoritative statement, or one binding upon any but the writer, is yet believed to be in essential harmony with what is commonly held and taught as fundamental among Unitarians; as it is also believed to be in essential harmony with reason, science, the best scholarship and thought of the age, and the teachings of Jesus.

Some Leading Points of Unitarian Belief, with Scripture References.

1. One God, and only one, the Father, a Spirit, the only proper object of worship; in contradistinction from a trinity, and worship of Jesus or of the Virgin Mary. Matt. vi. 9; Mark xii. 29; Jno. iv. 24; xvii. 3; xx. 17; Eph. iv. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5.

2. Jesus not God the Son, but the son of God (his sonship consisting in moral god-likeness, many others besides him being called in Scripture "sons of God"); not Deity but divine (all humanity being the "offspring of God," and therefore, in the degree of its perfection, divine). Matt. xvi. 16; Acts ix. 20; Acts xvii. 29; 1 Jno. iii. 1, 2, Hosea 1. 10; Matt. v. 9; Gen. 1. 27; James iii. 9.

3. Human nature not inherently evil (or, as the creeds of at least two of our great Christian denominations say, "dead in sin, wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body, and therefore

bound over to the wrath of God"), but, created "in the image of God," and even in its lowest estate containing much that is beautiful, noble and well-pleasing to God. Gen. i. 26, 27; Rom. ii. 14, 15; Mark x. 14, 15; Luke vii. 1-9 and 36-48.

4. God's love universal and everlasting, extending as much to the next world as to this; all punishment remedial and disciplinary; all men finally to be saved. Is. xlix. 15; Jer. xxxi. 3; Ps. cxxxvi. 1; Matt. xviii. 14; Col. i. 20; Heb. xii. 5-10; 1 Cor. xv. 22-28; Luke xv. 20-24.

5. The Bible the most important and sacred of books, but not to be accepted as infallible, because in some of its parts opposed to the teachings of science, the best conscience and reason of our time and the teachings of Jesus. Matt. v. 33-44. Compare Matt. v. 44 with Ps. cix., with Deut. xix. 13-21, with Josh. xi. 6-23, and with 1 Sam. xv. 2-11. Joshua x. 12-13; Jonah i. 17, and ii. 10.

6. Conscience sacred; inquiry to be full and free. Luke xii. 54-57; Rom. xiv. 1-5; 1 Cor. x. 15; 1 Thess. v. 21.

7. Man's whole duty included in love to God and love to man. Mark xii. 29-33; Rom. xiii. 8-10.

Representatives of American Unitarianism.

For the benefit of any who may not have had their attention called to the great prominence that Unitarians are coming to have in the best Litera-

ture, Scholarship, Thought, Reform, Statesmanship and Religious Teaching of the times, a partial list is given below of eminent American Unitarians :

RELIGIOUS TEACHERS.

<i>William E. Channing,</i>	<i>Andrew P. Peabody,</i>
<i>Theodore Parker,</i>	<i>Thomas Hill,</i>
<i>Ezra Stiles Gannett,</i>	<i>Cyrus A. Bartol,</i>
<i>George R. Noyes,</i>	<i>James Freeman Clarke,</i>
<i>Orrick Deery,</i>	<i>William R. Alger,</i>
<i>Thomas Starr King,</i>	<i>Minot J. Savage,</i>
<i>Henry W. Bellows,</i>	<i>Wm. H. Furness,</i>
<i>Ralph Waldo Emerson,</i>	<i>Brooke Herford,</i>
<i>Frederick H. Hedge,</i>	<i>Robert Collyer.</i>

POETS.

<i>Henry W. Longfellow,</i>	<i>John G. Whittier</i>
<i>William Cullen Bryant,</i>	<i>(Unitarian Quaker),</i>
<i>James Russell Lowell,</i>	<i>Bayard Taylor,</i>
<i>Oliver Wendell Holmes,</i>	<i>John W. Chadwick,</i>
	<i>Helen Hunt Jackson.</i>

HISTORIANS.

<i>George Bancroft,</i>	<i>Richard Hildreth,</i>
<i>John Lothrop Motley,</i>	<i>Francis Parkman,</i>
<i>William H. Prescott,</i>	<i>Jared Sparks.</i>

LITERARY MEN.

<i>Nathaniel Hawthorne,</i>	<i>David A. Wasson,</i>
<i>Edwin P. Whipple,</i>	<i>John Weiss,</i>
<i>James T. Field,</i>	<i>Thomas W. Higginson,</i>
<i>Henry D. Thoreau,</i>	<i>Charles Sprague,</i>
<i>George Ripley,</i>	<i>O. B. Frothingham,</i>
<i>Bret Harte,</i>	<i>Edward Everett Hale.</i>

LITERARY WOMEN.

<i>Lydia Maria Child,</i>	<i>Lucretia Mott</i>
<i>Margaret Fuller,</i>	<i>(Unitarian Quaker),</i>
<i>Louisa May Alcott,</i>	<i>Maria Mitchell,</i>
<i>Julia Ward Howe,</i>	<i>Mary A. Livermore.</i>

PHILANTHROPISTS, EDUCATORS AND SCIENTISTS.

<i>Samuel G. Howe,</i>	<i>President C. W. Eliot</i>
<i>Abbott Lawrence,</i>	<i>(of Harvard University),</i>
<i>Peter Cooper,</i>	<i>Chancellor Wm. G. Eliot</i>
<i>Dorothea Dix,</i>	<i>David Starr Jordan,</i>

<i>Joseph Tuckerman,</i>	<i>Prof. Ezra Abbot,</i>
<i>Henry Berg,</i>	<i>Nathaniel Bowditch,</i>
<i>Horace Mann,</i>	<i>Louis Agassiz,</i>

STATESMEN AND PUBLIC MEN.

<i>President John Adams,</i>	<i>Daniel Webster,</i>
<i>President John Q. Adams,</i>	<i>Josiah Quincy,</i>
<i>President Fillmore,</i>	<i>Charles Sumner,</i>
<i>President Jefferson,</i>	<i>John C. Calhoun,</i>
<i>Benjamin Franklin,</i>	<i>Charles Francis Adams,</i>
<i>Chief Justice Marshall,</i>	<i>Gov. John A. Andrew,</i>
<i>Edward Everett,</i>	<i>U. S. Supreme Judges</i>
<i>Harrison Gray Otis,</i>	<i>Wayne and Meier,</i>
<i>Judge Joseph Story,</i>	<i>Dorman B. Eaton,</i>
<i>Geo. William Curtis,</i>	<i>Hon. Geo. F. Hoar,</i>
<i>Hon. John D. Long,</i>	<i>Hon. Carroll D. Wright.</i>

This list does not claim to be absolutely accurate, yet it is very nearly so. It falls below rather than exceeds the truth. Indeed another longer list, of names nearly as eminent, could easily be made.

It would also be easy to make out a list nearly or quite as striking of eminent Unitarians of England and other European countries.

We have not included the names of eminent Universalists, though Universalists are Unitarians, as are Hicksite Friends, and most of that large religious body in this country known as "Christians." The Progressive Jews are also essentially with us, as well as an ever increasing number of the more liberal thinkers in all the orthodox denominations. The Broad Church party in the English Church, and in the American Episcopal Church, and the New Theology men in the Congregational body, are a long way on the road toward Unitarianism; while the religious teachings of such liberal independents as Rev. David Swing, Dr. H. W. Thomas and Henry

Ward Beecher are essentially ours except in name.

New England is the part of the United States where organized Unitarianism most prevails. The city of Boston has 29 Unitarian churches. Yet the real influence of Unitarianism is nowhere, not even in Boston, to be measured by the number of its churches. Unitarian views are spreading in every direction—among the educated and thinking classes, among the common people, into the orthodox bodies. Dean Stanley, shortly before he died, expressed the conviction that the Liberal Theology will be the prevailing theology of the twentieth or the twenty-first century.

The American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon street, Boston, is the leading organization of the denomination in this country. Any person desiring information, books or tracts on Unitarian subjects, can obtain the same by applying to that address.

Benjamin Franklin and Unitarianism.

Benjamin Franklin, one of the greatest and most judicial minds that America has produced, left behind him this creed, as the result of his life-long study and reflection:—"I believe in one God, the Creator of the Universe ; that he governs it by his providence ; that the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children ; that the soul of man is immortal and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion. As to Jesus of Nazareth, I think

his system and his religion, as he left them to us, the best that the world ever saw, or is likely to see; but I apprehend they have received various corrupting changes; and, I have, with most of the present dissenters of England, some doubts of his Divinity."

This statement of belief, embracing the ripest conclusions of perhaps the greatest mind of the New World, constitutes, as will be seen, a correct, condensed statement of the doctrines commonly held by Unitarians.

President Adams and Unitarianism.

Says Charles Francis Adams, writing of his grandfather, John Adams:—"He devoted himself to a very elaborate examination of the religions of all ages and nations, the result of which he committed to paper. The issue of it was the formation of his theological opinions very much in the mould adopted by the Unitarians of New England. Rejecting the prominent doctrines of Calvinism,—the Trinity, the Atonement, and Election,—he was content to settle down upon the Sermon on the Mount as a perfect code. In this faith he lived with uninterrupted serenity, and in it he died with perfect resignation."

The Sermon on the Mount, so rational, so universal in its application, our most complete statement of Jesus' teachings,—but containing, be it noticed, no intimation of his Deity, the Trinity, the Fall of the Race in Adam, the Atonement, the Infallibility of the Bible, (except to deny it—see Matt. v. 33-44), Election, or any other of the dis-

linctive, leading doctrines of "Orthodoxy"—this sublime and wonderful Sermon of Jesus, has never been by any people so persistently set forth and urged as a sufficient religious code, as it has been by Unitarians during their entire history.

Abraham Lincoln and Unitarianism.

Says the author of "Six Months at the White House," with reference to the religious creed of President Lincoln:—"The conversation turned upon religious subjects, and Mr. Lincoln made this impressive remark: 'I have never united myself to any church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith. When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of both Law and Gospel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," that church will I join with all my heart and with all my soul.'"

Had President Lincoln only known it, there is one Christian church which does "inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership," exactly this sublime injunction of Jesus.

Longer tracts on many subjects may be had free by addressing the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

HANDBOOK FOR UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON ST., BOSTON

Contents

	PAGE
FOREWORD	5
THE CONGREGATIONAL INHERITANCE	9
FELLOWSHIP IN ORGANIZATION	13
FELLOWSHIP FOR WORK	15
METHOD OF ORGANIZING A CHURCH	20
SUGGESTION FOR CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS	24
METHOD OF CALLING AND INSTALLING A MINISTER	28
ADMISSION INTO UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP	33
THE BUSINESS METHODS OF A CHURCH	35
METHOD OF ORGANIZING A SUNDAY SCHOOL	43
METHOD OF ORGANIZING A BRANCH ALLIANCE	50
METHOD OF ORGANIZING A YOUNG PEOPLE'S UNION	52
THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH	56

Foreword

IN January, 1886, a committee of the American Unitarian Association, consisting of John F. Moors, Grindall Reynolds, and Francis B. Hornbrooke, prepared and printed a pamphlet on "The Organization of Parishes and Churches." In the Annual Report of the Association in May, 1900, it was pointed out that this pamphlet was both out of date and out of print, and that there was a rational demand for a carefully prepared manual for the facilitating of the organization of new churches on the principles of our order, and for the guidance of ministers and parish committees in the conduct of the administrative affairs of our existing churches. In accordance with this suggestion, the Directors of the American Unitarian Association, at a meeting held June 12, 1900,

Voted, That the recommendation of the Secretary for the appointment of a committee to prepare a manual on methods of church organization is hereby indorsed, and the President is requested to appoint such a committee.

The following persons were accordingly appointed as this Committee,—John P. Forbes, Roland W. Boyden, George H. Badger, Clara B. Beatley, Florence Everett, with the President of the Association as Chairman.

The handbook prepared by this Committee is issued to promote an intelligent appreciation of the principles and methods which have been found helpful in the experience of our religious fellowship,

Foreword

and in the hope that the suggestions offered may be helpful to those who are engaged in the work of organizing or administering our free churches. While the recommendations set forth in this handbook are primarily directed to the needs of new churches, it is hoped that the older churches will also find useful suggestions for the conduct of their work, and that by the more general adoption of the principles here set forth our methods of administration and our ways of ordering the worship of our churches may be harmonized and unified, and our churches brought into closer and more sympathetic fellowship.

The Committee does not assume that the adoption of its recommendations will create opportunities or powers. The endeavors of a working church are not mechanical, but inspirational. The Committee seeks simply to help churches to utilize the forces that are assumed to already exist in the purposes and hopes of ministers and people, to show our fellow-believers who long to advance the kingdom of God what they can do and how they can do it,—in a word, to point out some ways in which the latent power in the Unitarian movement can be organized and expressed. No mere machine methods are here proposed. The ways of working in our free churches must obviously be flexible, and must vary according to local needs and conditions; but the ways of working should never be loose and haphazard.

With one exception the methods of co-operative

Foreword

life and service recommended by the Committee have been abundantly tested in the experience of our fellowship. They are in complete operation in a few existing churches and partially adopted by nearly all. They are in no sense experimental. Experience has proved that, other things being equal, the churches are strong and fruitful in proportion to the measure of their use of the channels of organized life which are described, not originated, in this handbook.

The one recommendation which has not yet been sufficiently tested by experience relates to the organization of the church. From the Congregational inheritance of our churches we have derived a complicated and ineffective plan of organization for our societies. The people of our older churches are gathered into several distinct bodies, each body making its own rules, choosing its own officers, managing its own operations, without adequate sense of common work and purpose, without unity of plan, and sometimes even without harmony. The parish is usually a purely business body, owning the real estate and managing the money matters. The church is usually a small and inactive body, and in many cases is practically extinct. The Committee believes that this traditional system, if it can be called a system, is discredited: it should never be reproduced in new churches, and, where it exists in old churches, it should be gradually modified until a simpler and more efficient form of organization can be substituted. A single inclusive organization of

Foreword

all who are interested in the objects of the church, and who wish to co-operate with others to promote these objects, will truly express our free Congregational ideals, quicken the sense of unity, provide against friction and for adequate oversight of all departments of the church work, and give each member an equal privilege and duty in the church life. While, then, in most of the recommendations offered by the Committee, alternative methods or plans are suggested, in this primary matter, there is, in the judgment of the Committee, but one course of action which is just, wise, inclusive, and efficient.

The work of the Committee has been submitted to careful and repeated revision. A number of wise and experienced fellow-workers have offered their criticisms and suggestions, and now permit the handbook to be published with their general approval and recommendation to the churches for practical use. Among the friends who have thus aided the committee are Rev. Francis G. Peabody, D.D., of Harvard University; Rev. Edward A. Horton, President of the Unitarian Sunday-School Society; Rev. Daniel W. Morehouse, Secretary of the National Conference; Rev. Howard N. Brown, Chairman of the Council of the National Conference; Rev. F. C. Southworth, Secretary of the Western Conference; Rev. George Batchelor, editor of the *Christian Register*; Mrs. B. Ward Dix, President of the National Alliance; and Miss R. D. Homer, Secretary of the Young People's Religious Union.

S. A. E.

The Congregational Inheritance of Unitarian Churches

A Congregational church is a church governed by its own congregation. In the administration of its affairs, both ecclesiastical and secular, it is independent of diocese, synod, or presbytery, and also of all other congregations. Whenever a number of people meet together without external dictation, and express a common religious purpose, adopt articles of fellowship and a statement of faith, that group constitutes of itself a Congregational church. It chooses its own officers, determines its own order of worship, and selects its own minister.

For the sake of a wider fellowship and a greater usefulness a number of Congregational churches may unite in Associations or Conferences. In this way the interests of a common cause are furthered through wise and effective co-operation. But such organizations have no power to control the action of any church in the administration of its own affairs.

The word "Congregational" stands, then, not for a statement of theological belief, but for a form of church government. There are Trinitarian and Unitarian Congregational churches, there are Baptist and Universalist Congregational churches. By a rule of custom, Trinitarian churches that have adopted both the Congregational form of government and the fundamental doctrines of Evangelical faith, are spoken of, in distinction from other relig-

The Congregational Inheritance

ious bodies, as Congregational churches; but they possess no exclusive right to the name.

The churches of the Unitarian order are strictly Congregational churches. They inherit not only the forward-looking spirit, but the traditions, habits, and, in many cases, the names, organization, and properties of the original Congregational churches. As the direct and legitimate heirs of the founders of the Congregational system, they, almost alone among Christian churches, hold to the democratic principle of self-government in its purity and integrity.

When the Pilgrims came to Plymouth in New England, and on the hill facing the sea laid the foundations, both civil and religious, of our republic, they established, at the very beginning of religious history in New England, the principle of government by the congregation. This principle was followed by the Puritans at Salem and Boston. The Pilgrim Covenant, formed at Scrooby in 1602, declares that these people, "as ye Lord's free people, joyned themselves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in ye fellowship of ye gospell, to walk in all his wayes, made known or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them."

The Covenant of the First Church in Salem, adopted in 1629, reads, "We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in all His

The Congregational Inheritance

ways, according as He is pleased to reveal Himself unto us in His Blessed Word of Truth."

The Covenant of the First Church in Boston, established in 1630, is as follows: "We, whose names are hereunder written, . . . do hereby solemnly and religiously (as in his most holy presence) promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the gospel and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect each to other, so near as God shall give us grace."

These covenants are still retained by these three churches, though these churches, together with the majority of the Massachusetts churches founded in the seventeenth century, now acknowledge a Unitarian faith and fellowship. They became Unitarian through the natural and inevitable tendencies of their own free and progressive system of government.

Congregationalism is identified with all the great features of our National life. It has stimulated independent thought, actively promoted civil liberty and the practice of self-government. The spirit that led to the establishment of churches governed by the congregation led to the establishment of the New England town meeting, and finally to the democratic system of National government under which we live. A democratic church in a free state, which tolerates all other forms of religious faith and polity, relies for its wise conduct and permanent development upon the sound and widespread education of the people, and particularly

The Congregational Inheritance

upon a highly trained ministry. By the inevitable tendencies of its fundamental principles, Congregationalism has therefore contributed more than any other polity to the growth of toleration in religion and to the upbuilding of popular education. The great common school system we enjoy is largely a product of the spirit of New England Congregationalism; and Congregationalists have been foremost in America in founding colleges, universities, and seats of learning.

Congregationalism gives free play to the infinite diversity of human faculty and aspiration, and thus upbuilds the true unity of the spirit in place of sectarian rivalry or barren uniformity. The purpose and result of Congregationalism has been summed up in the saying that it "helps to educate men and women, for righteousness, through freedom, to unity."

It is, then, a noble heritage of independence, made effective for human welfare by co-operation and fellowship, into which the churches of the Unitarian order are permitted to enter. By this heritage Trinitarian Congregationalists and Unitarian Congregationalists alike are enriched. The Unitarian churches represent to-day the purity and completeness of the Scriptural and historic principles of church government which are the source of "a freedom that is religious and a religion that is free." To be faithful stewards of this trust, to transmit it augmented and enriched to their successors, is their great privilege and plain duty.

Fellowship in Organization

The free and independent churches of the Unitarian fellowship agree to walk together in certain Councils and Conferences for the quickening of their religious life, for the promotion of mutual good will, for consultation in regard to matters of common interest, and for the discovery and adoption of more efficient means of usefulness. The churches thus co-operating have no power to control the action of any particular church. Their association is purely voluntary, and does not comprehend the assumption or exercise of any authority.

1. These *Conferences* are various in their organization and in the extent of their activity. Nineteen Conferences, chiefly in Massachusetts, are organized, for the most part, on *county* lines, and are known as *Local* Conferences. Eight are *State* Conferences; and nine, which cover larger territories than a single State, are known as *District* Conferences. Most of the District and State Conferences and a few of the Local Conferences are incorporated, and hold and administer some funds; but, as a rule, the Conferences exist to promote acquaintance and co-operation rather than for the conduct of active missionary work. All the Conferences hold annual meetings, and many of them hold semi-annual or quarterly meetings. Every Unitarian church is expected to identify itself with the life and work of the Local, State, or District Conference within whose territory it is situated.

2. *The National Conference*, organized at a special

Fellowship in Organization

meeting of the American Unitarian Association in 1864, meets biennially at a time and place appointed by the governing Council, and consists of three delegates from each Unitarian church or affiliated organization. The Conference is a deliberative body, formed "with the purpose of strengthening the churches and societies united in it for more and better work for the kingdom of God." It is not incorporated, and on the administrative side it confines itself to recommending to the American Unitarian Association and the other incorporated and working organizations of the Unitarian body "such undertakings and methods as it judges to be in the heart of its constituency." The admission to the Unitarian ministry of ministers from other communions (see page 33) is in charge of the Fellowship Committee of the National Conference.

The Constitution and By-laws of the Conference, as well as lists of officers, Council, etc., will be found in the Unitarian Year Book. The Year Book should also be consulted for detailed description of the Local, State, and District Conferences.

Fellowship for Work

1. *The American Unitarian Association*, organized in 1825, incorporated in 1847, is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches. Its objects are to collect and diffuse information respecting the state of Unitarian Christianity, to produce union, sympathy, and co-operation among liberal Christians, to publish and distribute books and tracts, and to spread the principles of thought and conduct which Unitarians believe to be essential to the maintenance and progress of civil and religious liberty. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and sustains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, and publishes and sells or gives away books, tracts, and devotional works.

The Association is a representative body, and is national in spirit and government. The annual meeting is held in May; and any church or missionary organization of two years' standing, having made two successive annual contributions to the funds of the Association before May first of any year, is entitled to representation by its minister and two other delegates. The president, vice-presidents, secretaries, and treasurer are annually elected; and these officers, together with eighteen other persons, representing all parts of the country, elected for terms of three years, constitute the Board of Directors. Of this Board sixteen must be laymen and three must be women.

The National Headquarters are at the Association's

Fellowship for Work

building, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, and local offices are maintained in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. The Association at the National Headquarters furnishes office-room without rent to the other denominational organizations.

The Association is the publication agency for the denomination. Catalogues of its own publication of both books and tracts will be sent on application. A list of the books and tracts illustrating Unitarian principles and history will also be sent, or it can be found in the Year Book.

More than one-half of all the existing Unitarian churches in America owe their being to the work of the Association, and nearly all Unitarian churches have at one time or another known the fostering care of the National Association.

The work of the Association is chiefly supported by voluntary contributions of the churches and individuals interested in the cause it represents, while its office expenses are met from the income of its invested funds. The serviceableness of the Association is thus dependent upon the interest, zeal, and generosity of the churches and individuals who compose its membership; and it has no power beyond that which is derived from the support and co-operation of Unitarian ministers and people.

All information about the work and needs of the Association can be obtained by applying to the Secretary, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston. The list of officers and directors, etc., can be found in the Year Book.

Fellowship for Work

2. *The Unitarian Sunday-School Society*, organized in 1827, aids Unitarian churches in "promoting moral and religious education." It publishes manuals for Sunday Schools, provides hymn-books and special services, issues the paper for the young people of the denomination, sustains courses of instruction and lectures, maintains a book department; and its officers respond to calls for addresses and consultation. Membership consists of three delegates from each Unitarian parish or Sunday School sending an annual contribution to the treasury of the Society and of the life members who have at one time contributed \$10. The headquarters of the Sunday-School Society is in Room 7 of the building of the American Unitarian Association, and the book-room of the Society will be found in the same building. Descriptions and catalogue of the Society's publication will be sent to any address. For full information, see the annual reports of the Society and the Unitarian Year Book, wherein will be found also described the Western Sunday-School Society and the various Sunday-School Unions for local work. For the method of organizing a Sunday School, see page 43.

3. *The National Alliance* of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women is the organization of the women of the Unitarian churches, formed on its present basis in 1890. The objects of the Alliance are: to quicken the religious life of Unitarian churches, and to bring the women of the denomination into closer acquaintance, co-operation, and fel-

Fellowship for Work

lowship; to promote local organizations of women for missionary and denominational work, and to bring the same into association; to collect and disseminate information regarding all matters of interest to the denomination, and to devise ways and means for more efficient usefulness. A branch is an organization of women in a Unitarian church, formed for the religious and other purposes contemplated by the Alliance, or an organization formed by Unitarian women for the same purposes, but not connected with any church. An associate branch is a union of two or more branches for more effective work. The local branches retain their independence in local work, but make contributions to the National treasury. Such money as may be contributed unappropriated to the National treasury, over and above the one-third membership fee, is expended for such work as is in harmony with the other National Unitarian organizations. For complete information in regard to the Alliance, its organization and work, see the Unitarian Year Book and the Manual of the Alliance, annually published. The headquarters of the Alliance is in Room 6 in the building of the American Unitarian Association, Boston, Mass. For method of forming a Branch Alliance, see page 50.

4. *Young People's Religious Union*, organized in 1896, is the National society of the young people of the churches. Its objects are to foster religious life, to bring young people of Unitarian churches into closer relations, and to put into practice such

Fellowship for Work

principles of life and duty as tend to uplift mankind. The National Headquarters are at Room 11 of the building of the American Unitarian Association. For full information, see the Year Book; and, for recommendation on the organization of a local Young People's Religious Union, see page 52.

5. All other denominational organizations, ministerial associations, Unitarian clubs, benevolent societies, and educational organizations will be found described at length in the Year Book. The Year Book should be at hand for reference by all Unitarian ministers and parish officers.

The Method of Organizing a Unitarian Church

1. When it shall become evident, after a reasonable canvass of the situation, that the time is auspicious for the organization of a Unitarian church in any community, a letter of invitation may be issued, signed by several competent people (perhaps five or six), whose names shall be a warrant for the serious and substantial character of the new movement, addressed to all persons who may be assumed to be interested in the proposed organization. In some cases the invitation may be a public one, extended to all who may desire to co-operate; but usually it is wiser to assemble at the first meeting only such as are already known to be seriously enlisted. It is wise, also, to invite the Field Secretary of the American Unitarian Association or Superintendent of the department in which the new church is situated, or the Secretary of the State or Local Conference, to be present, and assist by his council and advice. The following form of invitation is suggested:—

You are cordially invited to attend a meeting to be held [*time and place*] for the purpose of organizing a Unitarian church in this community, in case it shall appear expedient, after due deliberation, to take this action.

2. At the appointed time for the meeting, one of the signers of the invitation, or some person selected by the signers, may call those assembled to order,

Organizing a Church

read the formal letter of invitation, and ask for the nomination of a moderator, who shall be elected by acclamation. The meeting shall further organize by the election of a temporary clerk.

3. The moderator shall then call upon some proper person to state clearly and explicitly the circumstances which make it appear expedient to organize the church, after which a formal motion for organization shall be presented. The following is suggested as a form for this motion : —

Voted, That we proceed immediately to the organization of a Unitarian Church to be known as ————.

4. If, after full discussion, the vote of organization shall be passed, the adoption of a Covenant or Bond of Fellowship shall be in order. The form indorsed by the National Conference, and in use in many Unitarian churches, is as follows: "In the love of truth and the spirit of Jesus Christ we unite for the worship of God and the service of man." For other suggested forms see the Report of the Committee on Covenants published by the American Unitarian Association.

5. After the adoption of a Covenant, a consideration of a Constitution and By-laws shall be in order; or, if preferred, the appointment of a committee to prepare and report such code and Constitution at a later meeting.

A suggested form for Constitution and By-laws will be found on page 24.

6. The actual membership of a new church con-

Organizing a Church

sists of those who sign the Covenant or Bond of Fellowship, and are regularly enrolled according to the procedure laid down in the Constitution and By-laws. In regular order the signers of the invitation to the meeting of organization, and those invited to attend, whether present or not, from that fact have immediate right of enrolment; while other members are added in accordance with such qualifications as may be required by the Constitution. It is not in the tradition of our churches that any theological tests or confession of faith or spiritual experience shall be made a requisite of membership in any Unitarian church; but it may wisely be provided that a proper committee first assure itself of the moral probity and serious intention of all persons applying for membership before they are received into full enrolment.

7. Upon the final adoption of a Constitution and By-laws and the actual enrolment of members, the church shall immediately organize itself by the election of permanent officers and committees, and shall assume the orderly functions of a religious body. It is a fitting act of courtesy that its clerk shall forthwith communicate with the Superintendent or Field Secretary for the department in whose territory the church is situated, the Secretary of the nearest Local or State Conference, and the ministers of the Unitarian churches in the nearest neighborhood, informing them of the organization of the new church or society.

8. A new church becomes enrolled in the Year

Organizing a Church

Book and recognized as in full fellowship with the Unitarian body on the approval of the Board of Directors of the American Unitarian Association. An application for such approval should be made through the Secretary of the Association. Any church so approved is readily received into the fellowship of the State or Local Conference to which it may naturally belong upon application made through its Secretary. Every church enrolled in the Year Book is entitled to representation by pastor and delegates at the biennial meetings of the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches ; and every church which has made a contribution to the funds of the American Unitarian Association for two succeeding years is entitled to representation by pastor and delegates at the annual meeting of that Association which is held in Boston in May.

9. It is necessary for every church which proposes to hold property, and greatly to be desired for every church, that it become legally incorporated. As each State has its different laws of incorporation, no rule of procedure can here be laid down, the advice and service of a competent attorney being necessary.

Suggestion for a Constitution and By-laws for a Unitarian Church

The following forms of Constitution and By-laws are presented simply as a suggestion to newly organizing churches and societies, being compiled from the constitutions of several of our newer churches :—

ARTICLE I.

The name of this church shall be

ARTICLE II.

Object.

The object of this church is set forth in its covenant : “In the love of truth and the spirit of Jesus Christ we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.”

Alternate Statements of Purpose.

1. The object of this church shall be to maintain regular services of Christian worship in this community, and to upbuild in the hearts of its people the high ideals of a rational, progressive, and exalting religion, in the love of God and the service of man.

2. The object of this church shall be united thought and action in the study and practice of Christianity.

ARTICLE III.

Membership.

Any person in sympathy with the purposes and methods of this church, who shall be approved by the Board of Trustees as of moral seriousness and probity of character, may become a member of this church by signing the Bond of Fellowship (or such covenant of faith and right endeavor as may be established as its basis of working fellowship) ; but the right to vote at business meetings of the church shall be reserved for members who have attained the

Constitution and By-laws

age of twenty years and are regular contributors to the maintenance of worship.

ARTICLE IV.

Officers.

The officers of this church shall be a President, a Clerk, a Treasurer, and ——— Trustees, who shall all together constitute a Board of Trustees. These officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of each year, and shall continue in office until their successors are chosen. The Board of Trustees shall fill all vacancies occurring in these offices.

Alternate Statements. Officers.

1. At the annual meeting of the church there shall be elected a Clerk, a Treasurer, and a standing committee consisting of ——— members, all of whom shall hold office until their successors are chosen.

2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine members of the church, chosen for terms of three years. Three Trustees shall be chosen at each annual meeting. The Trustees shall choose from their number a President, a Clerk, and a Treasurer.

ARTICLE V.

Meetings.

The annual meeting of the church shall be held ——— for the electing of officers and transacting of all other proper business. Stated meetings shall be held ———. Special meetings may be called at the order of the President or Board of Trustees for such purposes only as may be specified in the call of the meeting. Ten days' notice shall be given for every such meeting.

ARTICLE VI.

Amendments and By-laws.

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any legal meeting of the church, provided the proposed change or amend-

Constitution and By-laws

ment shall have been fully set forth in the call for such meeting, a two-thirds vote of the members present being necessary to the adoption of such amendment.

By-laws not conflicting with the provisions of this Constitution or with the State laws may be added or changed at any time by a majority vote.

BY-LAWS.

1. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the church and of the Board of Trustees.

2. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to keep record of all meetings of the church and of the Board of Trustees, to keep a correct roll of its members, to hold in custody all papers and documents belonging to the church, and to perform such other duties as may naturally devolve upon his office.

3. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to hold in custody all funds of the church, to keep an account of all receipts and expenditures, to pay such bills as may be approved by the Board of Trustees, and to render at the annual meeting and at such other meetings as may be required a financial statement of the church.

4. The Board of Trustees shall have general charge of the conduct of all business affairs of the church and the control of its administration, but no contract involving any expenditure of money exceeding ——— shall be made without a vote of the church.

5. The Minister of this church shall be chosen, and his salary determined, by vote of the church at a regularly called meeting; and a vote of the church shall be necessary for his dismissal.

6. The standing committees of this church shall be ———.* These committees shall be chosen by the Board of Trustees at its first meeting after the annual meeting of each year, in such manner as the Board of Trustees shall decide. Special committees may be appointed at any time.

7. The Minister of the church, the President, the Superintendent

* Among such committees are usually: (a) Finance; (b) Charitable and Missionary Collections; (c) Hospitality; (d) Music; (e) Church Decoration; (f) Care of Building.

Constitution and By-laws

of the Sunday School, the President of the Women's Branch Alliance, and the President of the Young People's Religious Union shall constitute a Committee of Conference, who shall meet at such regular times as it shall itself fix, to consider the general welfare of the church, and make such recommendations to the Board of Trustees or any standing committee as shall seem conducive to the general good.

Method of Calling and Installing a Minister

1. *The Call.*—When a new church becomes ready to settle a minister or when a vacancy occurs in the pastorate of any church, it is customary, at a meeting of the society held as early as possible, to appoint a committee to take in charge the supply of the pulpit and the recommendation of a candidate or candidates, to be considered at a later meeting of the parish.

2. The experience of many churches has proved it to be wise that, as soon as possible, with the advice of the Field Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, the Secretary of the Local Conference, or other competent leader in denominational affairs, a very short list of desirable candidates (not more than four) be carefully selected from all names recommended in any way, and that the men in this list be given each at least two hearings before the congregation; after which the Committee on Pulpit Supply shall, if possible, unite upon and recommend a single candidate, and present his name to a meeting of the church. This nomination should be acted upon before any other names are considered. All useless and undignified discussion should be avoided. No church should admit to its pulpit, even for a single service, a candidate who cannot bring clear, ample, and recent credentials of good ministerial standing. It is the duty of church officers and committees to

Calling and Installing a Minister

protect the pulpit against clerical adventurers and vagrants. Carelessness in the discharge of this grave responsibility has too often resulted in disaster.

3. If at the meeting of the church, on an informal ballot, it shall appear that a general unanimity of choice can be reached, a formal motion is presented and voted upon, substantially as follows:—

Voted, That the Rev. ——— be invited to become minister of this church with salary of ———, and that the Clerk (or Secretary) be instructed to communicate this invitation to him.

4. On the acceptance of this invitation by the pastor-elect the pastorate may begin at such time and under such conditions as may be arranged by him and the proper committee of the society.

Ordination.—1. It is the established custom of our churches that a minister shall be inducted into the active pursuance of his high calling by a formal public service of ordination. According to the long tradition of Congregational churches, a man is not properly a candidate for ordination until he has received and accepted a call to the pastorate of some church or has been commissioned by some competent body to undertake missionary or other ministerial work.

A. THE COUNCIL.—1. The service of ordination is conducted under the auspices of some church or Conference or other competent body; and by

Calling and Installing a Minister

long established (though not invariable) custom a Council of churches is invited to assist, by its approval, in the conduct of the service.

2. To this Council are invited by a letter missive (1) all Unitarian churches which may naturally be considered as neighboring churches; (2) all churches whose pastors are invited to take part in the services; (3) and such other churches or individual ministers as may, by courtesy, because of peculiar relationship to the pastor-elect or the society inviting, be expected to attend. The usual form of letter missive is as follows: —

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN ——— TO THE ———
CHURCH IN ———

Greeting:

The ——— parish in ———, having called the Rev. ——— to be its minister, and he having accepted the invitation, the evening of ——— has been appointed for his ordination. We cordially invite you to be present by minister and delegate.

The Council will meet at ———. Public services will begin at ———.

For the Church,

—————

Committee.

3. The meeting of the Council is called to order at the appointed time by the Chairman of the Parish Committee of the inviting church, who shall request the nomination and election of a Moderator. After a brief prayer by the Moderator, a scribe is chosen, who shall call the roll of the Coun-

Calling and Installing a Minister

cil as prepared by the Clerk of the parish inviting the Council. The Clerk of the parish may then read the record of the meeting at which the action calling the pastor-elect was taken, the letter to the pastor-elect containing this call, and his letter of acceptance, after which the candidate for ordination may be invited to make such statement as shall seem to him fitting regarding his education and professional equipment and his purpose of work and spirit of service. Then may be presented the formal motion for proceeding to the service of ordination, which may in substance be as follows :—

Voted, That this Council approves the action of the ——— Church in calling the Rev. ——— to be its minister, and hereby appoints the Rev. ——— to extend the right hand of fellowship at the service of ordination.

4. After the passing of this vote, the Council shall be dissolved. The Moderator of the Council may introduce the public service of ordination by an announcement of this action on the part of the Council.

B. PUBLIC SERVICE.—The parts usually assigned in an ordination service are: (1) Invocation; (2) Reading of Scripture; (3) Sermon; (4) Prayer of Ordination; (5) Charge to the Minister; (6) Right Hand of Fellowship; (7) Charge to the People.

2. These parts are assigned by mutual arrangement between the committee acting for the church and the pastor-elect. The prayer of ordination and

Calling and Installing a Minister

the charge to the minister, naturally, are given more directly according to the personal desire of the minister, the charge to the people according to the desire of the church.

3. The service of ordination has its natural focus of significance in the prayer of ordination, and this should therefore be assigned always to a minister whose standing in the Unitarian fellowship and dignity of personal character befit the responsibility of the ordaining function. The right hand of fellowship is in ordination extended in behalf of the Christian ministry and the Unitarian fellowship; and the minister extending it should be, therefore, himself in full fellowship and in active work of the ministry, and his words should be of simple welcome and congratulation. The benediction is pronounced by the new minister.

4. The service of installation is similar to that of ordination, though with a shaded distinction of significance. In many churches a Council is not invited to assist at installation, but all neighboring Unitarian churches and others naturally interested should be invited to attend. The right hand of fellowship has a more local significance in a service of installation, and should be assigned to one who shall immediately represent the Local Conference or the neighborhood into which the minister is welcomed.

Admission into the Unitarian Fellowship

1. When an organized *church* heretofore independent or in fellowship with another Christian body desires to enter the Unitarian fellowship, a formal vote or resolution may be adopted at a special meeting of the parish, declaring the desire of the members. This vote may read as follows:—

“Whereas the [*name of church*] of ——— finds itself in faith and practice in sympathy with the purposes and aims of the Unitarian churches of America,

Resolved, That the Trustees (or Parish Committee) be instructed in the name of the church to send fraternal greetings to the American Unitarian Association, and request that the name of the church be duly enrolled upon the list of free and independent churches which acknowledge the Unitarian name, faith, and fellowship.

Upon the approval of the Directors of the Association the name of the church may be duly enrolled upon the list of churches in the Year Book, and notice sent by the Secretary of the Association to the Secretary of the National Conference, and the State or Local Conference in which the church is situated, and the church may enter into the fellowship of organization and work as described on pages 13 and 15. If preferable, the church may first seek the fellowship of the Local, State, or District Conference, and be by such conference commended to the National Conference.

2. When a *minister* in fellowship with some other religious body wishes recognition as a Unitarian

Admission into the Unitarian Fellowship

minister, application should be made to the nearest member of the Fellowship Committee of the National Conference. This committee, acting under the authority of instructions embodied in votes passed by the Conference and by the American Unitarian Association, has jurisdiction over the authorized list of Unitarian ministers published in the Year Book.

In deciding upon the fitness of a candidate for admission to the Unitarian fellowship, the Committee will be guided above all by such proofs of the moral earnestness and integrity of the applicant as may be discovered after a careful investigation. It may also take into account the amount and kind of preparation that has been made for the work of the ministry, and may advise with the candidate as to any further course of study that he may seem to require. In all cases, however, the Committee may, at its discretion, refuse to put the name of a candidate upon the list before he has been regularly settled over a Unitarian church. This Committee also has power to cause the name of any person to be removed from the list, when it is satisfied that in conduct or character said person has become unworthy to hold the office of a Christian minister in the Unitarian fellowship.

The Business Methods of a Unitarian Church

The business of a church should be conducted with exceptional care and scrupulous accuracy. All the engagements of a parish should be undertaken and carried out as sacred trusts, with all the exactness, fairness, and fidelity that can be expected in the acts of any trustees.

The church should appoint to administer its business affairs only men and women who appreciate the responsibility, who know how to transact business in a way which will not cause friction and misunderstanding, and who will not allow personal interests to blind them to the good of all.

1. *Incorporation*.—Every Unitarian church should be incorporated under the laws of the State in which it is situated, and qualified to hold property. The statutes of the State which relate to the mode of calling and conducting the meetings of a religious society and certifying and recording the results should always be carefully studied and complied with. The statutes differ in the States of the Union, and no general recommendations can be made here.

2. *Membership*.—For the peace and security of the church, membership should be clearly defined. The rights of those who are entitled to vote should be made clear beyond mistake; and this should be done by careful attention to the law where it declares the right, and, if it does not, by framing con-

Business Methods of a Church

stitutional rules and proper by-laws and settling in advance just what the conditions of membership are. Constant attention should be paid to maintaining an accurate record of existing membership. It is recommended that the qualifications of a voter in a Unitarian church be :—

1. Acceptance of the Covenant or Bond of Fellowship of the church.

2. Stated attendance on the worship of the church for at least one year.

3. A contribution to the support of worship according to the usages and customs of the church.

3. *Records*.— Every corporate or legal act of the church should appear in its own *record book*. This should be separate from the record book of the Board of Trustees or Standing Committee. The clerk or secretary is a very important officer, and should be held to the strict and scrupulous discharge of his duty. In more than one case the whole property of a church has been imperilled by a careless keeping of its corporate records. In addition to these records the minister should keep the parish register, recording the admission to membership in the church, deaths, dismissals, and removals, and baptisms, marriages, and funerals.

4. *Annual Meeting*.— The annual meeting of the church should be an important occasion, and attendance at it should be a part of the duty of every member. There should be reports from all the activities and benevolences of the church ; and the proper officers, committees, and delegates should be elected or appointed.

5. *Church Property*.—The care and control of the *church building* is vested in the corporation; and the Trustees or Standing Committee represent the corporation in determining the necessity or propriety of the various uses to which the building may be put. Neither the minister nor individual members of the congregation have any right to give or rent the church building for any purpose, however laudable, without the assent of the Trustees. It is desirable that even special services should not be announced without the concurrence of the Trustees, because the Trustees are primarily responsible for the safe-keeping of the property. On the other hand, the Trustees have no right to use the building for other purposes than those which naturally belong to a religious society without the assent of the church. The building is sacred to religious uses and the business necessarily attendant on religious uses. As a rule, it is found expedient to reserve the church building proper for religious associations only, but lectures or concerts of a kind sanctioned by the uses of the denomination or the community may properly be conducted in it with the tacit assent of the society. It is customary to give the organist the right to control the use of the organ.

6. *Finances*.—Entire *publicity* of the financial condition of a church is thoroughly wholesome. There should never be any secrecy or silence about income and expenses. The treasurer's statement should be presented in full at each annual meeting,

carefully audited, and, when feasible, printed for distribution to the congregation. The congregation is entitled to know all the details of the church expenses, with the exception of personal charitable aid; and it will always be found that publicity leads to interest, and interest to co-operation and generosity. As a rule, the minister should be paid regularly on the first of every month, and the choir and sexton at the same time. If a debt is incurred, it should not be permitted to become chronic. If it cannot be extinguished at once, it should be put in the way of gradual extinction. The discouragement of a debt is not in its existence, but in its increase. If the current is flowing in the right direction, relief is only a question of time. The existence of a debt should never be made an excuse for refraining from the usual charities of a religious organization. It is sometimes urged that a church ought not to give to others until it has provided for its own debts and expenses. This course has not, however, approved itself in the experience of our churches. A church that ceases to give ceases to have. To suspend outside benevolence until a debt is paid is to turn away the chief element of strength and progress. The people who give toward the extinction of the debt probably do so because the church is active, benevolent, and willing to be serviceable in missionary and charitable causes.

7. *Parish Ways and Means.*—The methods of raising money for the necessary expenses of main-

taining a useful church vary according to the customs or conditions of different communities. The majority of Unitarian churches depend upon annual voluntary subscriptions. The pews are free; and the expenses are met by the pledges of the members, payable usually through the so-called envelope system, either weekly or monthly. A large minority of Unitarian churches are supported by the renting of pews. A small number of the older churches retain the historic proprietary system, where pews are owned by individuals, who pay taxes or assessments on their property for the support of worship. In some cases, two of these methods are employed in the same parish, as where some pews are owned and others rented, or where some pews are rented and the remainder of the income raised by subscription.

In regard to these different methods it is recommended:—

a. That every church should own and control its own property. The private ownership of pews is foreign to the true spirit of a Christian church and to the democratic principles of the Congregational order. No new church should now be organized upon the proprietary system; and, where that system has been inherited, it should be discontinued as rapidly as circumstances permit. In such cases the church should gradually by gift or purchase acquire the rights of the private owners until all such rights are extinguished, and the title to the entire church property, together with the administration of the affairs

of the society, vested not in the proprietors, but in the church as a whole.

b. The system of raising money by the renting of pews and sittings is often found to be the safest and easiest method of collecting the revenue, but it sometimes places the poorer members of the church at a disadvantage. In actual working, this method has often proved itself the most efficient; but it is not ideal, as it introduces an undesirable mercantile or competitive spirit, and in a measure begets a subtle spirit of division or exclusiveness.

c. The voluntary system is democratic, consistent, and in accord with the principle of Christian brotherhood. When it is efficiently used, it is the best method; but it is dependent for its success upon the industry and fidelity of the collector or treasurer, who raises the subscriptions and keeps the accounts. Where it is well administered, this system works admirably; but too often it has become, through careless and inefficient management, the cause of large and disastrous deficiencies.

Any system of parish finances rests at the bottom upon the forethought, energy, and promptness of those who adopt and administer it. Each system counts its successes and its failures. There is no system so good that it cannot be wrecked by bad management. There is no system so bad that it cannot be made to work well in the hands of wise and faithful administrators.

8. Charitable and Missionary Contributions.—Experience has abundantly proved that, in raising

Business Methods of a Church

money for the charitable and missionary work of the church, the method of simply taking a collection at a church service is entirely inadequate. There are three methods that are thorough: one of which is always available.

a. The officers, or possibly the minister of the church, may issue by mail a printed statement of the purpose for which money is asked, incorporating a specific appeal for generous gifts for that end. In this appeal there may be enclosed envelopes upon which shall be printed the objects for which a contribution is requested, and a date upon which the envelope may be placed in the collection box at church. In connection with this method a collection may be announced for the day specified on the envelopes, so that people who do not wish to place anything in the envelope may be at liberty to contribute cash in the collection box. It should also be specified in this letter of appeal that, in case the giver cannot be present on the Sunday of the collection, his contribution can be mailed to the treasurer of the church.

b. The church may have a regular committee on collections, which shall consist of one person in a small parish, of several persons in larger parishes. The committee ought to be of such a size that its work can be accomplished within one week; and the duty of this committee should be to visit all interested persons, and lay before them a careful explanation of the object for which their subscription is being asked. With this method also a special col-

lection may be used, the collectors themselves being supplied with special envelopes which they can leave with the people who will accept them.

c. At the beginning of the financial year the officers of the church may issue a card calling for subscriptions for the year for all of the regular objects to which the church contributes. For example, there may be specified upon this card the American Unitarian Association, the Unitarian Sunday-School Society, Local Charities, the Sunday School, etc. Under this plan the contributions for general objects can be paid at the convenience of the subscriber in the same manner in which he pays toward the support of the local church.

The second of these two methods has by experience been shown to be best in the smaller cities and towns, but less advantageous in the large cities, where congregations are very widely scattered in their residences. All three of these methods have been proved by the experience of many churches to be efficient in securing generous contributions for charitable and denominational enterprises. Nearly all of our people are able to give away certain sums of money in addition to what they give to their own churches. Very rarely is it the case that any individual gives so munificently to his local church that he cannot afford to contribute to the larger cause for which the Church stands. The people are able to give and glad to give to whatever cause they believe in; and the vitality of our charitable and missionary work depends chiefly upon good methods and hearty co-operation.

Method of Organizing a Sunday School

1. *The Committee on the Sunday School.*—A Superintendent of the Sunday School should be elected by the church, and should in turn select the teachers, and appoint as officers a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Librarian. These persons together form a committee, the Superintendent acting as Chairman. The minister, if not serving as Superintendent, should be a member *ex officio*. The committee should hold regular meetings for the consideration of all business pertaining to the Sunday School, the Secretary and the Treasurer rendering reports at each meeting.

2. *The Call.*—The committee having organized and made plans for the opening of the school, a notice must be given from the pulpit, stating the date of beginning, and extending an invitation to parents and to all others interested in the school to co-operate with the committee in securing the attendance of pupils. A printed notice, setting forth the aims and prospective advantages of the school, should be sent by the Secretary to each family represented in the church and to other families that may be interested.

3. *Departments.*—The teachers are to be assigned by the Superintendent, according to aptitude, to Primary, Intermediate, and Advanced Departments, the pupils being grouped according to their development. The boys and girls should be taught

Organizing a Sunday School

together in the Primary Department, and as far as possible in the Intermediate, where the practical working of the plan is more difficult. If separated in this department, they ought to be reunited in the Advanced.

Another arrangement, in some respects still better, is a division of pupils into four grades: Primary, Junior, Senior, and Advanced. The youngest in the Primary, those between eight and fourteen years in the Junior, those between fourteen and eighteen in the Senior, and all over eighteen in the Advanced department.

4. *Lesson Systems*.^{*}—Three systems are in use in Unitarian Sunday Schools, each having some peculiar merits. The wise choice can be determined only by local conditions.

1. Independent lessons, adapted to the needs of individual classes.

2. The One-topic System, which subordinates special needs to the good of all, provides for a general lesson each Sunday, and insures a profitable round of discussion at teachers' meetings.

3. The Graded System, which provides a regular course of study adapted to the development of the growing mind, to be pursued during a series of years.

5. *Promotion*.—FIRST METHOD.—Each year a

^{*} Text-books, courses of lessons, and a large and varied amount of Sunday-School supplies may be obtained at the rooms of the Unitarian Sunday-School Society, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Consultation with the President of the Society, who has in his possession accumulated experience of the practical working of many Sunday Schools, will prove an advantage to beginners in the Sunday-School work.

Organizing a Sunday School

class should be promoted from the Primary Department to the lowest grade of the Intermediate, and provided with a teacher who is to continue with the class through all the grades of the Intermediate, and, in cases of marked efficiency, through the Advanced Department. Those teachers who do not continue with classes through the advanced period may repeat with a new class the work of the Intermediate Department. Specially trained teachers are usually needed for the Advanced work. This method of promotion is the one in general use in Unitarian Sunday Schools. It is to be commended for the opportunity it affords for the continued influence of loved and trusted teachers.

The older Advanced classes may join in a Bible Class, led by the minister. They could form the strong nucleus of the branch of the Young People's Union or they might become a co-operative force with the Committee on the Sunday School in forwarding the many interests of the school.

SECOND METHOD.—A permanent teacher may be provided for each year's grade, the pupils being promoted from class to class, according to day-school method. This mode of promotion gives the pupils the advantages of specialized work and of personal contact with all the different teachers. With able and well-equipped teachers in the Advanced classes the same desirable results can be secured as with the one-teacher method.

6. *Financial Support.*—The Committee on the

Organizing a Sunday School

Sunday School should estimate the annual cost of the school, which includes expenses for furnishings, for text-books and library, for social occasions, and for such paid service as is necessary for the success of the school, and acquaint the Finance Committee or Trustees of the church of its need. The money should be appropriated by the Trustees or Finance Committee, and paid to the Treasurer of the Committee on the Sunday School, who keeps a careful record of the receipts and expenses, and reports monthly to the committee and yearly to the church. Money for Sunday-School expenses should be appropriated by the Committee on the Sunday School.

In cases where church support is impracticable, the Sunday School may assume the responsibility of its own support, raising through weekly contributions and occasional entertainments the money to provide for the necessary running expenses and for whatever activities outside of itself in which it may choose to engage.

7. *The Conduct of the School.*—I. OPENING EXERCISES.—A strong central influence can be secured through an inspiring order of worship. The school bond must be strong to keep the pupils in regular attendance during the inevitable changes of class work. The school, led by the Superintendent, should unite in an opening service,* the pupils being seated with their teachers according to classes, the younger pupils in front. The service

* A Sunday-School Service Book is published by the Sunday-School Society, which has an extensive use.

Organizing a Sunday School

may consist of passages of Scripture, responsive readings, prayer, and hymns, and some definite statement of faith and bond of union.

2. **THE CLASSES.**—Each class should be provided with tables and chairs, the height varying according to the needs of the pupils. Classes may be separated by screens where close contact of classes is otherwise unavoidable. The teacher records in a class-book the attendance at school and at church, and notes the total contribution of the class. The lesson then follows without further interruption.

3. **THE CLOSING SERVICE.**—This should be a brief service, from memory if practicable. It must be wisely chosen, to give the crowning impression of the hour. The benediction should be followed by the distribution of lesson papers, library books, and other supplies, which the Secretary and the Librarian have systematically arranged during the class period. The classes remain seated while the teachers deliver the supplies. An orderly dismissal is thus insured.

8. *Practical Work.*—Classes should be encouraged to bring money contributions each Sunday to provide for some practical work in harmony with the spirit of the church. The whole school may unite in the support of some Unitarian or unsectarian charity, or each class can have its own class treasury, with its own special object of interest. One Sunday each year may be given to reports of

Organizing a Sunday School

this work, and the congregation invited to join the Sunday School on that day, and become acquainted with its working methods.

9. *Denominational Instruction*.—Interest may be stimulated in the denominational life by acquainting the Sunday School at definite times with the work of the National organizations, and particularly of the American Unitarian Association, Sunday School Society, and Young People's Religious Union. These organizations have a common centre, and bear an intimate relation. The members of the Sunday School need to be led into a knowledge of the aims, methods, and value of these denominational forces. The annual observance of Association Day may be made an effective means to this end.

10. *Special Services and Occasions*.—Christmas, Easter, and Flower Sunday should be observed by special and appropriate services. The school may either share the worship of the church, which may be especially enriched for the occasion, or have its own appropriate service in the church, at an hour when all may join in the exercises.

Special social gatherings may be arranged for, to promote mutual acquaintance, and good will. The normal demand of children for enjoyment ought to receive appropriate recognition by the Committee. When the older classes can be led to share in the entertainment of the younger, the result is most beneficial to the school. A good Sunday School flourishes best with a strong social spirit.

Organizing a Sunday School

11. *Home and School Conference.*— Provision should be made for a genuine conference of home and school at least once a year. At this meeting the minister, the Superintendent, and teachers may present the claims of the school and urge the co-operation of parents, and parents may present the needs of the school from the home standpoint. Upon both sides there is opportunity for much appreciation as well as honest criticism; and the conference will become a source of mutual profit and satisfaction.

12. *Relation of School and Church.*— Both Superintendent and teachers must recognize that the school is an important element of the church life, and should measure their success by their power to bring the young people into vital church relations. To this end the Committee on the Sunday School should co-operate with other church committees in every possible way, interesting the young in the Alliance, in the Young People's Religious Union, and in other church organizations, exerting a constant though often silent influence toward church membership. A comprehensive report of the work of the school should be returned to the church each year.

Method of Organizing a Branch Alliance

In view of the need of missionary work throughout the country and of the necessity of increasing our own zeal and freshening our own religious life, it is earnestly hoped that the women of every church and society of our faith will form a Branch for co-operation in the objects of the National Alliance.

1. *Organization*.—A Branch is formed by the coming together of the women of the congregation, who agree to carry on the religious, philanthropic, and social activities for which the church should stand, accepting the purpose and methods as set forth by the National organization. Officers should be elected, by-laws for local management adopted, and plans made for carrying out the objects for which the Alliance stands.

2. *Finances*.—One dollar paid annually to a Branch constitutes any one a member of the National Alliance, entitling her to vote at its business meetings. A Branch may have a smaller local fee.

Each Branch sends one-third of its membership fees to the general treasury for the use of the National body. The remaining two-thirds are used for religious, missionary, or church purposes. This, with all other money received by a Branch, is disbursed by the Branch itself.

3. *Representation*.—All members are entitled to attend and to take part in all deliberative meetings, but only *delegates* chosen by the Branches can vote

Organizing a Branch Alliance

at the business meetings of the National body. Every organized Branch is entitled to one delegate for any number of members under thirty, and another delegate for each thirty members additional to the first thirty.

4. *Meetings*.—It is recommended that Branches hold meetings at least once a month, notices of such meetings being given the Sunday preceding from the pulpit or in such other manner as shall best give the information, with such details as shall tend to create an interest in those not already familiar with the work, and to increase that of the members. It is further recommended that a short devotional service be held at these meetings; and, inasmuch as the primary objects of the organization are religious and denominational, it is suggested that religious and denominational subjects be chiefly chosen for consideration.

The main objects of the meetings should be to develop religious feeling, strengthen religious purpose, create increased interest in our denomination, and tend toward a spread of our own faith. While the value of all charitable and philanthropic effort is recognized and acknowledged to be essential, the Alliance adds to these religious and denominational interests.

Method of Organizing a Young People's Religious Union

1. At an informal meeting of the young people, called for the purpose, a temporary chairman and secretary are chosen, the plans of organization are discussed, and a vote is carried to form a Young People's Religious Union in the —— Church. A committee of three is appointed to prepare articles of organization and to report at a stated date. Another committee of three, to report at the same date, is appointed to nominate officers for the permanent organization. The temporary meeting is then adjourned to the date stated.

2. At the adjourned meeting the report of the committee upon articles of organization is received and voted upon, article by article, with free discussion, being amended, if so voted. The report of the Nominating Committee is received and accepted; and the officers nominated are voted upon and elected, and enter at once upon their duties in conformity with the articles of organization. The Secretary should send a report of the new organization to the Secretary of the National Union. This will be a signal for a letter of greeting and for the establishment of the proper social and financial relationship.

3. The articles of organization should be simple. With variations to meet local needs, they may be as follows: —

Suggestion for Constitution

1. The name of this Society shall be the Young People's Religious Union of the —— Church.

2. The object of the Union shall be to foster religious life and fellowship. In recognition of allegiance to a common purpose the Union adopts the watchwords of the National Union, "Truth, Worship, Service." In pledge of loyalty to the —— Church, it adopts the motto "I serve."

3. *Membership.*—The membership shall consist of the young people in the Church and Sunday School over sixteen years of age, and of such other young people who show a sincere desire and a true purpose of co-operation. Signing the articles of organization shall make one a member. The minister of the church, the officers and teachers of the Sunday School, may be associate members.

4. *Officers.*—The officers shall consist of President and Vice-President, Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Executive Committee (or a Council) consisting of the four officers named, and of two other members chosen by the Union. The questions of program and of finance form the regular duties of this Committee, with such other business as may arise in the general conduct of the Union. The associate members may serve as an Advisory Board, when needed. They hold no office and have no vote.

5. *Meetings.*—Meetings shall be held weekly (fortnightly) during the church year on —— evening. The first —— evening in April shall be a business meeting, at which officers for the ensuing year shall be chosen.

6. *Reports.*—A report of each meeting shall be kept by the Secretary. An annual report shall be rendered to the —— Church at its annual meeting, and a copy of this report shall be sent to the Secretary of the National Union.

7. *Election of Officers.*—A Nominating Committee of three shall be appointed at the last meeting in March to present a list of officers to be voted upon at the annual business meeting in April.

8. *Change in Articles.*—The articles of organization may be changed or amended at a regular meeting, by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that notice of the proposed change has been sent with the notice of the meeting to each member by the Secretary.

A Young People's Religious Union

4. *Conduct of Meetings.*—A brief devotional form for the opening of each meeting and another for the closing may be memorized, and made a permanent part of the program. Varied devotional exercises conducted by the President, or by a member chosen for the purpose, may follow the opening devotion. The program should be arranged with the view of cultivating spiritual expression and the interchange of religious thought. Wherever it is possible, a paper should be prepared by some member. The program should be arranged for several months in advance, to give time for preparation. As far as possible, the talks or papers should be original, the object of the meetings being to give each one an opportunity to advance his own thought on the subject and to promote general discussion.

The National Union publishes a list of topics annually, and the use of these topics is recommended. The *Christian Register* and the *Universalist Leader* publish weekly helps for this program, and the Secretary of the National Union is always ready to help by correspondence. Union meetings are facilitated by the use of the recommended list. A book of hymns and tunes, entitled "Jubilate Deo," has recently been prepared for the use of the National Union. Its general use in the branches will strengthen the spirit of union, as well as enrich the devotional service of each branch.

5. *Rally Meetings.*—An important feature of the Union work is the rally meeting, at which neighbor-

A Young People's Religious Union

ing branches of the National Union are invited to unite with the local branch in a special meeting. A program of music, readings, and addresses should be prepared. The National officers are ready to furnish speakers for such meetings at any time. They will also visit churches to help organize and encourage the young people, and will aid in every other possible way all branches of the work.

The Worship of a Unitarian Church

1. The traditional *Order of Worship* in the churches of Congregational inheritance is : —

Prayer.	Reading. (<i>Sermon.</i>)
Singing.	Prayer.
Reading. (<i>Scripture.</i>)	Singing.
Prayer.	Benediction.
Singing.	

This order can be modified and altered in many ways according to local tastes and conditions, but it remains the foundation of all Congregational orders of service. In a church which has no Service Book and which depends for its music altogether on the congregational singing of hymns, this traditional order may still be found the most practicable and helpful.

In churches where a choir is employed and where no Service Book is used, the following order of service is recommended : —

Organ Voluntary.
Opening Sentences or Prayer.
Choir Anthem.
Scripture Reading.
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)
Prayer. (*People sitting with bowed heads.*)
Choir Chant.
Notices and Offering.
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)
Sermon.
Prayer.
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)
Benediction. (*People standing.*)
Organ Postlude.

Worship of a Unitarian Church

In churches where the singing is altogether congregational, but where a Service Book, a Psalter, or Book of Responsive Reading, is available, the following Order of Service is recommended : —

Organ Voluntary.

Congregational Hymn (Doxology). (*People standing.*)

Opening Sentences and Service. (*People standing until prayer in service.*)

Responsive Psalms.

Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)

Scripture Reading.

Prayer. (*People sitting with bowed heads.*)

Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)

Sermon.

Prayer.

Offering.

Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)

Benediction.

Organ Postlude.

Most Unitarian churches employ a choir and also use some simple Service Book or Book of Responsive Readings, and a few have inherited or adopted a more or less elaborate liturgical service. The following are orders of service which have justified themselves in the experience of many churches, and are recommended for adoption wherever the local circumstances permit : —

I.

Organ Voluntary.

Doxology.

Invocation.

Anthem by the Choir.

Responsive Reading. (*People standing.*)

Worship of a Unitarian Church

Choir sings, "Now unto the King," etc.

Choir Hymn.

Prayer. (*People sitting with heads bowed.*)

Response by the Choir.

Scripture Reading.

Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)

Notices.

Sermon.

Lord's Prayer. (*All uniting.*)

Collection.

Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)

Benediction.

Choir and People sing "Amen."

II.

Organ Voluntary.

Anthem by the Choir.

Opening Sentences and Short Prayer.

Responsive Reading. (*People standing.*)

Gloria by Choir and People.

Scripture Reading.

Anthem by the Choir.

Prayer. (*People sitting with heads bowed.*)

Response by the Choir.

Notices and Offering.

Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)

Sermon. (*At the close the minister says, "Let us unite in silent prayer."*)

Choir chant "Lord's Prayer."

Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)

Benediction.

Choir and People sing "Amen."

The Order of Service should be printed or legibly written, and a copy placed permanently in the pulpit for the information of visiting ministers.

Worship of a Unitarian Church

Services of worship should begin promptly at the hour announced.

In the conduct of the worship great care should always be taken to preserve harmony among the various parts of the service. Reading, music, prayer, and sermon should illustrate the principle of a progressive unity. All should be dominated by the central truth or truths it is desired to impress.

Every Unitarian church should take pride in its reputation for devout behavior and for cordial hospitality. A religious service should solemnize, inspire, enlighten, and refresh those who take part in it. Strangers should be heartily welcomed, and no one suffered to go away unnoticed or lonely of heart because of lack of cordiality on the part of ushers, minister, or people.

2. The *number of services* that it may be desirable to hold on Sunday differs according to the needs of different communities and the wishes of worshipping congregations. As a rule Unitarian churches hold a morning service at 10.30 or 11 A.M., with a Sunday School at 9.30 or at 12, preferably at the later hour. To this many churches add an evening service at 7.30 or 8 P.M., or a vesper service, largely musical in character, with a short sermon, at 4 P.M. or 5 P.M. In case no second service in the home church is thought desirable, arrangements may wisely be made for holding evening or afternoon services in some neighboring community or mission station.

Worship of a Unitarian Church

3. It is recommended that the *offering*, or *collection*, whether for current parish expenses or for some stated charity, be made a definite and regular part of every service. The minister may introduce it with appropriate words of Scripture, and while the ushers pass the plates the organ should be softly played or the choir chant. When the plates have been passed throughout the church, they may be carried to the communion table or in front of the pulpit, and received there by the minister, who may offer a brief prayer.

4. In some churches, reading of *notices* from the pulpit may be omitted at the discretion of the minister and trustees; but, when this is done, the more important notices should be printed in a calendar or with the order of service, and distributed in the pews.

5. *Special services* are customarily held in Unitarian churches on Christmas, Easter Sunday, and Thanksgiving Day. Whitsunday, or the second Sunday in June, is often observed as Flower Sunday, or Children's Day. The first Sunday in November may be observed as Rally Sunday, when special appeal may be made for church loyalty. Other special services may be held as dictated by local custom or appropriateness. It is recommended that anniversaries in local church history, as the date of the founding of a church or the settlement of a pastor, anniversaries of the historic days in Christian history, birthdays of great religious leaders, and national anniversaries, as Inde-

Worship of a Unitarian Church

pendence Day, Patriots' Day, Decoration Day, and Forefathers' Day, be specially observed.

6. Almost all of the older Unitarian churches and many of those established in recent years hold *communion service* at least four times a year, usually on the first Sundays of January, March, May, and October, and also on Easter Sunday. This service is made primarily one of remembrance and personal consecration. The invitation is invariably extended to all who find the service helpful. No order of service can be here laid down, as it must be dictated by the custom of each independent church and the feeling of each officiating minister.

7. The *service of music* is, in the majority of Unitarian churches, intrusted to the leadership of an organist or choir-master and a choir. A considerable number of churches have congregational singing only, usually led by an organist or precentor; but the larger number employ either a quartette choir or a volunteer or paid chorus. A few churches prefer a varied musical program, changing from Sunday to Sunday, and use both vocal and instrumental selections. A well-balanced religious service requires both congregational and choir singing. The two forms are not antagonistic, but supplementary. Chorus anthems, quartette anthems, solo singing, instrumental music, and congregational hymns are all legitimate and useful methods of religious impression and expression.

8. The *organist*, who is usually, if not always,

Worship of a Unitarian Church

the choir-master, should be chosen with careful attention to his or her knowledge of music, taste, skill, experience, and power of leadership. The personal quality of the organist is as important as his musical proficiency. Upon him depends, in only a little less degree than upon the minister, the efficiency and impression of the service of worship. He is the minister's first assistant, and he should be able to work cordially with the minister and strive toward the same ideals.

9. Comparisons between different forms of *choir organization* are idle, for the machinery is of less importance than the personal elements. There is in some churches a sensitiveness or even a serious division of opinion about the choir, which is made possible only by a common misunderstanding of its true place and function. It should be noted (1) that a choir should never be maintained simply because the custom of a single generation has appeared to establish it in the order of Protestant worship, (2) that a choir should never be maintained to give entertainment or any form of Sunday concert, (3) that the choir should never be maintained as a financial speculation or to secure large audiences and public notice. The choir should be regarded as an integral part of the congregation, having a special function, to lead the congregational singing, and by appropriate music to deepen the devotional feeling. The seriousness of this sacred privilege should be understood and appreciated by both choir and congregation. The congregation should endeavor to

Worship of a Unitarian Church

help the singers by showing them all sympathy and respect, by refraining from captious criticism, and by recognizing the members of the choir as fellow-worshippers; and the choir should be made to feel deeply their responsibility, to promptly discharge their obligations, to sink personal ambition and petty jealousy, and devote themselves to devout and skilful rendering of their part of the common worship.

The precise composition of the choir is unimportant if the temper and spirit be right. On the expressive side a chorus best represents and leads a worshipping congregation. On the impressive side a well-balanced quartette is perhaps more effective. The best service is rendered by a paid or volunteer chorus containing a highly trained quartette, all working under the guidance of a competent director, and in close co-operation with the minister.

10. *Choir music.* Too much care cannot be given by those in charge of the musical service to the choice of appropriate anthems and other musical selections. Show pieces and operatic solos should be rigidly excluded. The choir should be led to feel that the congregation expect from the music devotional quickening, and not merely entertainment. Anthems that may be appropriately used at the climax of a service are out of place in the introductory service; and musical selections which are devotionally preparatory should not be introduced at the close of worship. The words of all the musical selections should be carefully scruti-

Worship of a Unitarian Church

nized. Selections that contain words or texts expressing doctrines foreign to the spirit or faith of Unitarian congregations should be excluded. The indiscriminate use of any words which have a pious flavor or which are commended only by the excellence of the music to which they are set should be avoided. The choir-master before making his selections should invariably consult the minister, and endeavor to fit the musical selections as closely as possible to the spirit and thought of Scripture, prayer, and sermon. No pains can be too great to secure an appropriate adjustment of the choir music to the parts of the service next to them, and to unify and harmonize the whole service of worship.

II. The *congregational singing* is the most practicable and important part of the musical service. Its success involves no risk of misunderstanding and no expense. It is always the stimulus, as it is the expression, of a cheerful, earnest religious vitality. Good congregational singing flourishes wherever there is in a congregation a true religious fervor which craves expression. It languishes in congregations where the spiritual life is subjective or torpid. It cannot be secured without effort, and it will not run of itself. It requires guidance, co-operation, and the personal endeavor of the minister, choir-master, or precentor, and individual members of the congregation. The minister should always be alert to emphasize the value of good congregational singing, and to select hymns which will not only be the natural utterance of the emo-

Worship of a Unitarian Church

tions of the worshippers, but also appropriate for congregational rendering. The organist or precentor should labor to build up technical proficiency, and by the contagion of personal enthusiasm arouse and guide the co-operation of the people. The people should insist on the privilege of united singing, and be alert to study new and better tunes, and to sing with unity of spirit and hearty good will.

12. The *hymn-book* should be carefully selected. A list of the hymn-books in common use in Unitarian churches will be found in the Year Book; and supplies may be ordered through the American Unitarian Association. Unitarians have been one of the most prolific of Christian bodies in the production of good hymns, but all religious poetry is not adapted to singing. Hymns are not meditative poems or rhymed didactics, but words written primarily to be sung. They are praise and prayer addressed to an object of worship. The use of garbled or altered hymns is to be deprecated. If a hymn cannot be adapted to the spirit of a Unitarian congregation without alteration, it should be excluded. The music of the hymn-books has been greatly improved in recent years; but minister and organist should alike endeavor to exclude from the common use of the congregation the trivial tunes which are still printed in the hymn-books, simply because they are familiar. The congregation should insist upon expressing its religious emotions only in noble verse set to noble music.

REPORT *of the* Committee to
Collect *and* Codify the Cove-
nants *and* Statements of Faith
in use in Unitarian Churches



AMERICAN UNITARIAN
ASSOCIATION, 1901

R E P O R T *of the* Committee *to*
Collect *and* Codify *the* Covenants
and Statements of Faith *in use in*
Unitarian Churches



BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
1901

Preface

AT the Annual Meeting of the American Unitarian Association held in Boston May 22, 1900, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

“We believe that each church should seek in all ways to promote the devotion and loyalty of its followers to the great principles of religion for which we stand.

“We believe also that each church should do some definite work in training its children and youth in the positive affirmations of our faith.

“Therefore, be it resolved that we recommend to our churches and people the resolutions on church membership adopted at our last National Conference, and, in pursuance of the same, request that the President of the American Unitarian Association appoint a committee to collect and codify the church covenants and statements of faith now in use, to the end: first, that any church may be assisted in forming some basis of membership for its followers; and, second, that some wise system of presenting and teaching our faith to the young may be devised.”

In accordance with this vote the President appointed as this Committee Rev. Austin S. Garver, Rev. Lewis G. Wilson, Rev. William Channing Brown, Rev. Walter F. Greenman, Mrs. Prescott Keyes, with the President of the Association as chairman. Mr. Wilson was chosen secretary of this Committee, and the work of collecting the necessary

Preface

information and of preparing the report has been performed by him. The Committee is much indebted to Mr. Wilson for his wise, patient, and assiduous industry. The conclusions of the report have received the unanimous assent of the Committee, and it is issued in the hope that the results of the inquiry will be profitable to the churches of our free fellowship.

S. A. E.

Report of the Committee on Covenants

ACCORDING to the Unitarian Year Book for 1900, there are 459 churches in the Unitarian fellowship. Of these, 250 have responded to the circulars and question leaflets sent out by the Committee. These replies may be considered representative of the experience and belief, concerning the subjects under consideration, of the entire denomination. They come from all parts of our country,—from Eastport, Me., and from Portland, Ore.; from Montreal and from New Orleans. They represent every phase and every degree of our denominational life. We have replies from the oldest churches in New England and from some of the latest movements which have hardly gathered coherency and strength sufficient to call themselves churches. City churches of ancient and honorable traditions vie with suburban and country parishes, whose existence, in some instances, is like “Nirvana,” — which can be called neither a place nor a state, a locality nor a condition,—in setting forth the actual and theoretical bases of organized Unitarianism. In some instances the respondents lack that definiteness and grasp of local conditions necessary in making up a satisfactory summary. And in other instances the replies are too hypothetical or theoretical to be taken as serious statements of existing conditions. But, on the whole, these 250 replies furnish us with sufficient data to aid us in

Report of the Committee on Covenants

forming correct averages. They undoubtedly represent the conditions and tendencies that prevail throughout our body.

Many valuable practical suggestions have been contributed, which can hardly fail to be serviceable to those who wish to increase the usefulness and growth of their various churches. We will take each one of these six questions separately, and consider the nature and content of the replies received. After that, we shall be able to state concisely the practical inferences to be drawn from these replies. And, finally, we can briefly consider whatever suggestions we have to offer as the result of our inquiries.

I.

What is the covenant of your church?

It will be necessary to explain, at the outset, that the Committee, whether they so intended or not, must mean by "church" the body of people who are interested in and support public worship in a given place. This, as we shall see, is the necessary definition to give to the word "church" in our report for the simple reason that this is the sense in which the majority of the respondents have taken it. Now and then an elderly Unitarian minister, or some clergyman who has come to us from some other denomination, will know no definition of the word "church," except as the organized body of the "elect" within the society or parish,—meaning those who have subscribed to a covenant in due

Report of the Committee on Covenants

form, and are especially constituted to partake of the communion. But it should be understood that, even where the old dual organization of "church" and "society" has a nominal existence, it has, with very few exceptions, become so attenuated and vague that no practical force is given by it to our denominational life. In most instances it is perpetuated as a venerable relic of early Puritanism, cherished by a few individuals in some historic society, lovingly tolerated by many, and regarded as one of those survivals of a spent theology which will gradually disappear entirely. This being the actual condition, it becomes necessary for us to merge the second half of the second question with our first question, and make our first question read,—

What is the Covenant or Bond of Fellowship of your Church, Parish, or Society?—meaning, What is it around which you gather your membership as a religious organization? To put the question in any other form is to become involved in a hopeless tangle, owing to the confusion concerning the definition of a "church" in the minds of the respondents. Time has so far passed away from the days of the "Town Church," which in New England made the dual organization an ecclesiastical necessity, and the conception of human nature as divisible into two distinct categories—the saved and the lost—has so far become obsolete that clear results can only be obtained by considering a "Covenant" and a "Bond of Fellowship," a "Church" and a "Society," as respectively identical.

Report of the Committee on Covenants

Of the 250 churches whose responses we have in hand, 90 have adopted what we may, perhaps, call the Spring Garden Covenant, which was recommended by the National Conference of 1899,—“In the love of truth, and in the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.” We include among these 90 churches all those whose Bond of Fellowship consists of these words, or words which amount, practically, to the same thing; for, as a matter of fact, only a few have adopted exactly these words, without any change or addition. In the Unitarian fellowship that Bond of Union which would not allow some scope for the expression of local individuality is unthinkable. This is shown by the great and interesting variety of changes to which this simple and excellent statement of the National Conference has been devoted. 111 churches report some other Covenant, Bond of Fellowship, Preamble, or Affirmation of Belief. Among them are some that are very much involved and very theological: others are simple business statements, and scarcely to be regarded as declarations of spiritual purpose. Many of them have long since ceased to have a conscious existence in the life of the church, being evidently resurrected from the tomb of oblivion for the benefit of the Committee. There are many simple and beautiful and impressive statements of faith or purpose, which no one could read without receiving some inspiration, as, for instance:—

Report of the Committee on Covenants

We hold the objects and aims of the Christian Church, and this as a branch thereof, to be the upbuilding and growth of character ; the getting and doing of good ; the furtherance of knowledge and practice of divine law and duty, and works of charity and good-will toward men.

We avow it our religious duty to seek truth and encourage the search thereof by others, from all sources whence it may be found, allowing and fostering perfect liberty of thought and conscience for each, with responsibility only to the Judge of all.

We acknowledge our obligation to walk in amity and peace with our brethren, to promote the welfare of this church by support of its instrumentalities for good, by acquiescence in its councils, by attendance on its services, and, above all, by consecration of ourselves to a spiritual life, and striving in all ways to live as followers of the Master and children of God.

Or

Being no longer strangers, but heirs of the Covenant, confirmed of God to the Fathers, we, the undersigned, Pastor and People, Parents and Children, constituting the First Parish Church of —, of the Unitarian Church of Massachusetts, of the Church Universal, express the following : —

We recognize the Church, co-ordinately with the Family and the State, as a divine and permanent form of human society, of which we are members by birthright, and to which loyalty is a personal, indefeasible duty.

This is a part of “ A Statement of Principles and Aims ”—a substitute of a Covenant of 1826—in one of our country churches.

Many of these Covenants and Bonds of Union it seems almost a pity to pass over. Broad, beautiful, dignified, and free from all cant and intolerance, they would seem to constitute the most perfect expression of that religious liberty for which the fathers have struggled.

Report of the Committee on Covenants

“ We preach to all men everywhere
The Gospel of the Golden Rule,
The New Commandment given to men,
Thinking the deed, and not the creed,
Will help us in our utmost need.
With reverent feet the earth be trod ;
Nor banish Nature from the plan.
We study still with reverent search
To build the Universal Church,
Lofty as is the love of God
And ample as the wants of man.”

One minister, who has made a study of the religious and social conditions in the hill towns of New England, sends this quotation, and says, “ I have sometimes thought of presenting Longfellow’s description of the Theologian in the prelude to ‘ The Tales of a Wayside Inn ’ for a covenant for some covenantless church I may find, to walk by.”

41 churches out of the 250 report no statement of any kind. These churches have, for the most part, gone along in the even tenor of their way for many years, and either feel no pressing need for organization beyond the simple “ assembly,” or “ congregation,” or they are beginning to find it necessary to adjust themselves to new social and religious conditions, and will welcome any suggestions looking to that end which the Association may offer.

2.

The second question has reference to the number of organizations constituting the local institution.

Report of the Committee on Covenants

Of the 250 churches responding, 43 do not inform us upon this point. In some cases the writer does not seem to know whether there are one, two, or three organizations. In all such instances we may assume that more than one has not been of sufficient importance to be apparent. In some instances there is really no organization whatever which involves anything like a membership roll. The institution, in such cases, has been conducted by a few individuals that form a sort of self-perpetuating parish committee. The people at large, in a vague sort of way, recognize the church building as a place where a minister may be seen and heard once a week, hired and paid by "Them" when "They" see fit to do so. In some cases where no organization whatever is reported there is really a living church, with living ministries and living supporters, only with nothing in the way of organization to show on paper. They are few in number, but they certainly deserve to be thoroughly understood; and their lack of ecclesiastical machinery should not be allowed to reflect against their loyalty, their philanthropy, or their real value as centres of spiritual power.

A minister of one of these churches writes that the bond of fellowship is an "interest in what is going on," which is, indeed, not a very bad bond. "The test of membership," he says, "has never been defined. We pay our bills. We have good congregations. * We love each other. We find homogeneous action easily attainable. We look up

Report of the Committee on Covenants

and we enjoy life, and we give away all we can. If it became needful at any time to decide who belonged, I suspect we would make contribution of money the test. But we pray that the day of such things may not come."

There are, possibly, two or three churches that have the triple organization; namely, the ancient proprietorship, which consists, in the main, of property ownership in the church building, grounds, etc., the society which attends to the administration of the affairs of the institution, and the "church," or those who have entered into spiritual profession with one another.

There are 148 churches which, so far as we can make out, have only *one* organization. Some of these have recently abolished the dual or triple form, and simply decided to have the church and society, or parish, identical. Some call it all "Church," some call it all "Parish," some call it all "Society," and some call it an "Association." But in almost every instance a brief, clear, religious Bond of Union has been definitely adopted, and a carefully prepared roll of membership to go with it. Where in such bodies the communion service is observed, an effort is made to obliterate completely the impression that such observance implies any division lines, on the ground of character or religious profession, between those who join in the service and those who do not. 148 out of 250 who, so far as we can judge, have deliberately come to this situation would seem to imply certain unmistakable indica-

Report of the Committee on Covenants

tions. That such indications are valid is proven by the repeated expression of dissatisfaction with the old double form; and the movement to abolish this twofold system where it has existed, or to inaugurate a single organization including all interested persons where new movements are started, is unquestionably justified by the sense of the great majority of those who have responded to our inquiries. In one or two reports an attempt to form a church within a society is mentioned as a failure. The minister of one very prosperous church urges the use of the name "Society" instead of "Church," and "Bond" rather than "Covenant," his fear being that the superficial pietism often charged to the dual organism may otherwise be encouraged. In another place the minister declares that, while there is a "church" within his "parish," he seldom has any occasion to recognize it. And his case represents a great many others. Among the replies upon this point, I have found a great many such expressions as this: "My parish *is* my church." "I do not favor the double organization of church and society which is found in this parish." "I prefer the enrolment of all members of parish and congregation." "I do not think the old condition of church and parish as distinct a good thing. I believe it tends to make a separation which in fact is unreal and unnecessary." "I oppose church membership if it means an inner circle within the larger parish. Such an inner body causes too much mischief and dissension."

Report of the Committee on Covenants

“In organizing a ‘church’ within the parish, I found strong opposition from some of the best and most conscientious people.” “There is [here] a church distinct from the parish; but I do all I can to make the parish the church — *i.e.*, I preach the broad church, but practise the narrow — by taking in all those who desire to have church fellowship.” “Our Covenant, adopted 16 March, 1793, is in abeyance, but of late years has been so seldom availed of that we have come to recognize, practically, no dividing line between church and society, and may be said to have no church save the all-including birthright one.” Such testimonies might be continued indefinitely. The “church” in this society is “dormant,” it has become “obsolete”; “I disapprove of the dual organization,” — are characteristic expressions in, possibly, two-thirds of the replies, where any definite expression is given upon the subject. In justice, however, to the very small minority who apparently favor the “church” distinct from the “society” or “parish,” it should be said that one minister testifies as follows: “I organized the ‘church’ in —; and, though it has not been in existence ten months, it outnumbers nearly two to one the society organization. It is vital.” Another minister, in whose church there is neither covenant, bond of fellowship, nor form of admission to any roll of membership, declares, “It seems to me little better than childish folly to attempt to build up a creedless church.” In one place a dual organization seems to exist, and those who wish to join

Report of the Committee on Covenants

can take their choice,—to sign that part of the register which contains the covenant or that part which does not.

3.

“What is the form of admission to your church or society?”

45 of the 250 churches responding would seem to receive members by a simple signature upon the register or record of the organization. 96 report some form or ceremony, generally the right hand of fellowship, together with the signing of the book. 21 definitely state a financial condition to eligibility; and 43 either have no form of admission, or, if they have, it is not stated with sufficient clearness to so report. It may be assumed that in most cases a vote upon the names of candidates for membership precedes the actual initiation. Sometimes the names are posted in some conspicuous place for a certain length of time, and in other instances a certain length of time must elapse between the presentation of names to the society and the vote of election.

Concerning this matter of joining the church by some formal ceremony there are many interesting considerations presented by the respondents. There seems to be quite a variety of forms, and some of them seem unquestionably beautiful, impressive, and dignified. It would be out of the question to incorporate all of them in this report, or, indeed, to do more than to indicate their general character. Candidates for membership having been voted upon

Report of the Committee on Covenants

and accepted by the existing organization (except in such cases as where members are made by simply signing the register in private), are, in many cases, admitted in the presence of the congregation on Sunday, presumably at the close of the sermon, which has been appropriately adapted to such an occasion. After a short address to the candidates, they are invited to sign the book, one by one, and receive the welcome of the church by the right hand of the minister. After all have signed, the congregation rise, and all repeat the Lord's Prayer. In some cases the minister offers a prayer instead, and pronounces a blessing upon the new members. When all are seated, a hymn is sung and the service is ended. Sometimes the deacons of the church, in addition to the minister, stand near the candidates, and take them by the hand as they return from signing their names. All who can do so, of the society, are expected to offer their congratulations to those who have thus joined them in the sacred purposes of the church. Many variations of this general ceremony are reported; the choir is often introduced; the organ is sometimes played softly, while the minister reads the short address of instruction to the candidates. Flowers are used liberally in decorations.

It is worth while to notice that it rarely happens that elderly people present themselves for membership through such a service. The candidates are almost invariably young people, often those who have spent years in the Sunday School and are members of the Guild, the Young People's Religious

Report of the Committee on Covenants

Union, or kindred society. In several cases, respondents report direct opposition to any such method on the part of older people; and one minister writes the following: "Lack of encouragement on part of parents. No unusual thing for a young person to meditate the step, and, upon mentioning it at home, to receive the reply, 'Why, I never formally united with the church; and I am as good a Unitarian as anybody.'" Another declares: "My experience is continually surprising in finding those I least expected coming forward to this service. My difficulty and failure seems generally to be with the old Unitarian families, and there I frequently find the father's prejudice preventing the young people from uniting with the church."

Along the line of what has already been said concerning the double organization, it may be to the point to add the following, which is offered as one of the obstacles in the way of inducing young people (or any people, for that matter) to become members: "Deep-rooted conviction on the part of young people and also elders that to join the church implies the attainment of perfection instead of a constant striving after perfection. Our people dread to be deemed hypocrites." It should also be noted here that several ministers strenuously urge the custom of giving "letters" to members of their churches who remove from one town to another, and that in these days of social restlessness, when the population is so emphatically mercurial, these letters should be considered by those who give

Report of the Committee on Covenants

them and those who receive them the most cordial, as well as serious, instruments of fellowship. In one church, and possibly in others, certificates of membership are given,—illuminated cards or parchment paper,—signed by the clerk of the church and by the minister. It is also urged that the list of membership be most carefully kept, and used as often as possible, so that the fact of personal membership with the privileges and responsibilities that go with it may be constantly before their attention. This is done in some churches by sending notices on postal cards to each member of the church (“As a member of the First Unitarian Church, etc., you are hereby notified or invited”), attention being called to business meetings, parish reunions, receptions, prospective contributions, anything and everything which calls for the co-operation of all members.

Among the responses which have come to us there have been several earnest appeals for a suitable literature of instruction concerning the preparation of the young for membership in our churches, and for an acceptable service of initiation.

4.

The fourth question is as follows: “*What method of instruction do you find most successful in preparing the young for membership in the church?*”

87 report personal “advice,” “instruction,” “influence,” or “solicitation” on the part of the minister. 21 merely mention the Sunday School.

Report of the Committee on Covenants

29 combine both personal solicitation and the Sunday School, and 104 report no method.

As this whole subject will properly find all necessary elaboration under our consideration of the sixth and last question, we can omit further comments for the time being.

5.

The first part of the fifth question reads,—

“*Do you favor a definite church membership?*”

Making the necessary allowances for some vagueness as to what is meant by the word “church,” and assuming that what is referred to is the religious organization that actually exists, whatever may be its name, we get the following results from the 250 returns:—

156 declare themselves in favor of a definite membership. 34 more are not only in favor of definite membership, but use some expression of emphasis, like “Yes, *emphatically! most decidedly!*” “With all my heart!” “Most assuredly!” and sometimes “Yes!” with one, two, or more exclamation points. 47 are in doubt, using such expressions as, “I am not clear upon this point,” “I am undecided.” “In some cases, yes! but I doubt if it would work here.” And several want enlightenment upon the subject. 7 out of the 250 positively oppose the idea of definite membership.

The second part of the fifth question, which runs as follows: “If so, what measures of helping people

Report of the Committee on Covenants

to identify themselves with the church have commended themselves to you?" will, after what has now been said, receive all necessary attention under question

6.

"Have you ever had a Confirmation Class? If so, please describe your methods and their success or failure." And it should be said here that the Committee added a foot-note, requesting whatever suggestions the respondents might consider helpful in establishing the loyalty of our people, etc.

In 16 instances the Confirmation Class is believed in, although in these cases there does not seem to be any practical experience to fortify this belief. 37 have tried the Confirmation Class, and believe in it. 31 believe in something of this kind, but express themselves as opposed to the name "Confirmation." The reasons offered for a dislike for this name may be of service to those who are interested in this subject. "The word 'Confirmation' has been patented by the Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal churches with a meaning Unitarians cannot honestly employ. Its use helps them, and not us." Another writes: "No, I have no need of a Confirmation Class. I do not believe in adopting the methods of the Protestant Episcopal Church. My young people are coming into the church one by one during the entire year, in the fall and winter, as well as in the spring. An Easter Confirmation Class would meet with no favor among our members." "What

Report of the Committee on Covenants

place a Confirmation Class has in a church without a creed I cannot understand." One writes: "No. The name does not belong to our denomination. It is Episcopal to the backbone, and at once arouses a certain antagonism in some. No doubt the antagonism is foolish, but it is real."

At the same time there are many who express a decided belief in and desire for a course of instruction to prepare the young for an intelligent and faithful and loyal membership in the church; and quite a number answer, "Yes, but by some other name." There are "Preparatory Classes," a "Pastor's Preparation Class," "Consecration Class," and "Religious Study Class." Indeed, it may generally be taken for granted that even where the name "Confirmation" is used, it is not adopted in its original sense. Perhaps the following represents the average relation, among us, between the name and the thing itself: "I am a great believer in the Confirmation Class,—perhaps a new thing under the old name; for I mean simply a class of young persons instructed in the principles of our faith and our church history, and appealed to to try more earnestly to translate their creed into life." Among the responses received there are 8 which positively oppose both the name and the thing. 149 have no opinion upon the subject, never having had experience in a systematic attempt to induct the young into the church. This constitutes three-fifths of the responses received.

Many subjects which lie just outside the province

Report of the Committee on Covenants

of this report have been more or less directly involved in the questions and answers presented. Among them are baptism, christening, sprinkling, the communion service, discipline, associate members living at a distance; and even this Committee is cautioned about drawing conclusions without being familiar with local conditions and situations.

A Western lawyer believes that there has been too much vagueness concerning the purpose and character of our Church, and that a movement looking toward closer organization is most commendable. A layman writes: "The age is becoming practical. It does not take much interest in theology, but does take a great deal of interest in a practical, every-day, working church." One of our good doctors modestly wishes us to send him an earthquake to make certain old-time Unitarians publicly join the church.

No one can look carefully through these communications without being convinced that there is a serious and sometimes rather anxious desire, which is very general throughout our body, to *know* and adopt the methods most acceptable to the majority of our churches, in order that the diversity of our operations may become as harmonious as is the spirit of unity which now certainly seems well-nigh universal among us.

To put the whole matter in as concise form as possible, the following suggestions undoubtedly arise:—

Report of the Committee on Covenants

I.

A new conception of church membership, in our branch of the Congregational Church at least, has been adopted. To those who are acquainted with the evolution of New England Congregationalism, it will not be called a new conception, but, on the contrary, a return to that plain and simple and absolutely unaffected religious attitude which characterized the first churches established on these coasts. It is a curious and important fact that, during the first century of Puritanism in New England, there was practically nothing in the shape of a written creed which could be imposed upon the individual by any ecclesiastical authority. The First Congregational Church of Salem was established in 1629, and its covenant was so perfectly free from all cant and dogmatism that one might imagine it to be the bond of fellowship of one of our latest Unitarian movements. It says:—

We covenant with the Lord, and one with another; and do bind ourselves, in the presence of God, to *walk* together in all his ways, according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in his Blessed word of Truth.

The difference between that time and this, so far as we are concerned, consists in the fact that the prevailing theology of the seventeenth century was Calvinistic, while now it is rational and increasingly Christian. Those early covenants left Calvinism “open at the top.” Our bonds of fellowship now leave rationalism “open at the top.” The attitude

Report of the Committee on Covenants

of the individual with reference to the great problems of life is the same in either case.

The younger generation in our churches is almost entirely unconscious of the old distinctions between "church" and "parish." They have outgrown the consciousness of the elect and the non-elect; and it is practically incomprehensible to them that a human soul outside the church should be any the less dear to God than a human soul inside the church.

Hence it is true that membership in one of our churches no longer means a distinction between the lost and the saved. It means simply a declaration of purpose to walk consciously and openly with God, as a loving child, hand in hand with a loving Father.

2.

The second inference is that we may increasingly and deliberately regard ours as a birthright church. There is demand for an orderly process of religious culture recognized by ministers and parents. It should begin with the advent of the babe,— the new soul coming to us and welcomed joyfully from the vast unknown; received and dedicated in our church as its birthright; a treasure from God, for God, and unto God; of more value than the ponderous bulk of the planet Jupiter; a child of ours and of God's, as clearly born and predestinated a Unitarian as an American.

Then, in due time, let this child be directed and

Report of the Committee on Covenants

informed and counselled by the church, after its tender years, to be as surely regular at church service on Sunday as at school on Monday, a thing taken for granted and above discussion. And then, when the hour arrives, let the right hand of the church, through its minister, welcome this young man or woman to the full privileges and responsibilities of this church into which he or she was born.

3.

The third inference is that a definite church membership can be inaugurated wherever it is wisely done. Let the older members come frankly forward, and begin the list. All things have become new, in one sense. And now, for the sake of the future and the young who are to know nothing and care less for the bitter theological controversies that you have outlived, be among the first to accept the new interpretation of the church home.

Let this roll of membership be real and useful. There are duties and pleasures alike when it may be called into practical operation,—reunions of the church, annual roll-calls, appeals to members, and parish business meetings. It should be consulted again and again each year to the end that no member should forget or become indifferent to the fact of his membership. And, when one minister is succeeded by another, it should be at hand for the immediate use of the latter, so that the continuity of the church life may not be disturbed by the incon-

Report of the Committee on Covenants

gruity of relations which, under such circumstances, so often works havoc with the order and peace of the individual organization.

4.

The fourth inference is that there is a rational demand for a simple, honest method of instructing our young people in the principles of our faith and the value of our rich inheritance. There is need of a well-devised programme for "religious study classes" which shall prepare young people for membership in the church and loyalty to its covenant and purpose. The name of such a class is unimportant. In some churches the name "confirmation class" will be found to be natural and appropriate: in others, a name less associated with the practices of other communions will be found to more clearly express the freer and loftier aims we have in view. There is, finally, demand for an elastic but fairly uniform service of fellowship whereby new members can be welcomed into our churches.

No longer need any one fear the ghost of ecclesiastical oppression. It is for us now,—free to be ourselves and our best selves at all times,—it is for us to give actual body and outward expression to our principles and ideals. In the spirit of human sympathy and unlimited charity we can adopt harmonious methods; and we can apply those methods and we can champion those methods until, when

Report of the Committee on Covenants

the Unitarian stranger shall enter one of our churches in any part of the world, even though he were blindfolded, he shall feel the atmosphere and the touch of our holy spirit, and know that he is at home.

From these legitimate inferences, and as the result of the experience of many successful churches of our fellowship, we are therefore able to make certain definite recommendations to our fellow-workers. We do not assume any authority over the affairs of the free Congregational churches that acknowledge the Unitarian faith and fellowship, and we do not forget that local conditions will sometimes make our suggestions undesirable and our recommendations impracticable. We simply testify to the result of our investigation of the existing conditions, and ask for our recommendations the patient and serious consideration of all who are interested in the usefulness and perpetuity of our free churches :—

1. We recommend a single and inclusive organization for our churches. This organization should be the church.

2. We recommend the adoption in each of our churches of some brief and simple covenant or bond of fellowship which will express the purpose of the church life.

3. We recommend a definite and clearly defined church membership, consisting of those who have accepted the bond of fellowship. Voting on all

Report of the Committee on Covenants

matters pertaining to the finances of the church should, however, be restricted to those who have made some stated contribution toward the support of worship.

4. We recommend that the members of the church be received into its fellowship by some simple public service of recognition, and that the younger people of the church be prepared for such membership in a religious study class under the direction of the minister.

5. We recommend that the list of members be accurately kept up and carefully preserved.

6. We recommend that, when members of a church remove to another community wherein there is a Unitarian church, letters be addressed at once by the minister and clerk of the parish to the minister and clerk of the parish to which removal is made, commending the friends to the hospitality of their new church home.

7. We recommend that a special committee of the Association be appointed to suggest methods for conducting the preparatory class of young people and appropriate services of fellowship.

THE
UNITARIAN
CHURCH

Its History and Characteristics

A STATEMENT

BY

REV. JOSEPH HENRY CROOKER, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON, MASS.

THE
Unitarian Church

A STATEMENT

BY

REV. JOSEPH HENRY CROOKER, D.D.

These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

Adopted by National Conference, 1894.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON, MASS.

INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of this pamphlet is to give briefly and clearly certain information about the Unitarian Church ; its history, its characteristic convictions, its achievements, its hopes. In preparing it, the author has had in mind the needs of inquirers who have come to him in the course of a fruitful ministry seeking the information which is here set down. Dr. Crooker has had the privilege of serving two churches situated at the seats of two great state universities,—the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. In these academic communities he has won the confidence and lasting affection of a large number of young men and women who have become and are to become influential members of the communities in which they live. He writes this statement out of this unique and happy experience.

The statement does not represent a narrow sectarian view or a boastful spirit. With all his fellow citizens in this free household of faith, Dr. Crooker recognizes that Unitarianism is not now, and probably never will be, the one universal religion. It is rather a particular form of the religious life. It is not so much a system of thought as it is a habit of mind and a principle of conduct. The

representative expression of this habit of mind is to be found in the constant witness borne to the present life of God in the present life of man. Every true Unitarian seeks to cultivate the religious spirit that includes all truth, and the religious sentiment that embraces all men. Therefore Dr. Crooker's aim has been to affirm the great spiritual ideals of the human soul. He has been more intent on winning the doubtful, relieving the distressed, and inspiring the indifferent in matters pertaining to religion, than on criticising creeds, or controverting out-grown dogmas. He has written in warm appreciation of all forms of sincere piety, and has endeavored to speak the truth in love.

The mission of Unitarian teaching and work is "not to destroy but to fulfil." Its purpose is not to antagonize other forms of faith, but to satisfy some of the longings which those other forms of faith express; to discover and emphasize the permanent and universal elements of religious thought and life, and lead such powers on to nobler employment. It preserves the historic continuity of the progressive spiritual life of the Christian centuries. What Dr. Crooker has written is heartily commended to all who wish to know something of the nature of the religious movement which seeks thus to re-affirm the religion of Jesus Christ, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

SAMUEL A. ELIOT.

The Unitarian Church:

ITS

HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

I. HISTORY

I THE Unitarian Gospel began with the discovery
Beginnings that we live in a *Universe*. Its original affirmation
was the unity of God. The great teachings of science respecting the unity of energy, the unity of life, the unity of humanity, are confirmations of that early conviction.

II The prophetic writings, such as those by Amos,
Hebrew Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah, represent the spiritual
Prophets and enduring elements in the Old Testament. In
their protest against sacrifice, idolatry, formalism, injustice, and selfishness, and in their teaching of the unity, holiness, and goodness of God, they set forth what are now the essential Unitarian principles. Their plea that righteousness is what God demands and what man needs, — that righteousness is blessedness, — is our plea.

III We claim to teach what was central and essential
Jesus in the message of Jesus. We lay our emphasis on
the Beatitudes, the Golden Rule, the Law of Love (Matt. xxii. 34-40). We find the way of salvation described in his parables, where purity is set forth as the condition, growth the method, love the motive, character the fruitage, and service the expression of Eternal Life, or the kingdom of heaven.

IV We do not appeal to the New Testament as a
Apostles document of final and infallible authority, and we
do not claim that the Unitarian Gospel is merely an echo

of apostolic Christianity. But we do claim to represent its spirit and ideal. When Peter declared, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him," he proclaimed the Unitarian faith. When he described the ministry of Jesus to consist in "turning every one of you from his iniquities," he spoke like a Unitarian. See Acts iii. 26 ; x. 34, 35.

When Paul preached, "In God we live and move and have our being," and when he wrote, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; and the greatest of these is love," he stood on ground now occupied by Unitarians. See Acts xvii. 28 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

And when it was written by John or in the name of John, "Let us love one another, for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John iv. 7), the writer defined the Unitarian position. There are other things in the New Testament, but these teachings made the glory and strength of early Christianity, and they are the things that are eternal and that we lay to heart.

v
Early Church In the primitive churches there were beliefs in respect to the messiahship and second coming of Jesus, superstitions respecting baptism, and uses of the Old Testament, which are no part of our religion. But it is generally conceded by modern scholars that the original Christianity was not the acceptance of a creed but the adoption of a spirit like that of Jesus, and that the early churches were democratic in form, each independent, with no elaborate ceremonials and no radical distinctions between clergy and laity.

Great scholars representing many different denominations agree to-day that the *deification* of Jesus, as found in the Nicene and trinitarian creeds, has no adequate warrant in Scripture, and does not represent the original faith, but that it was a slowly developed philosophical *afterthought*, which was

rooted, not in the words of Jesus or the beliefs of his disciples, but in the mystical speculations of Alexandria.

It is also admitted that the so-called "Apostles' Creed" does not accurately report the ideas of primitive Christianity. It was not set forth by the Apostles themselves, but was slowly evolved under the stress of many controversies, and reached its present shape after the fourth century.

No modern church exactly reproduces the original Christian faith, polity, or ritual (it is not necessary that they should be reproduced) ; but what we claim is, (1) That many of the dogmas made prominent in the creeds of Christendom have no warrant in the teachings of Jesus ; (2) That the spiritual and eternal elements of primitive Christianity are affirmed by Unitarians. Confirmation of these statements may be easily found in the oldest church manual in existence, "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" (distributed *free* in an English translation by the American Unitarian Association), or in the two works by the great Oxford scholar, Rev. Dr. Edwin Hatch (Episcopal), "Organization of the Early Christian Churches" and "Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages."

VI At the first general council at Nicæa in 325, Arius
Arians denied the doctrine that was finally adopted — the Nicene Creed (forced through by the imperial pressure of Constantine) — that Jesus, the Son or Logos, is "very God of very God" (same substance — *homoousion*), and he asserted that Jesus was a being more than man, but separate from God, not begotten from eternity but created in time. The later Arian view of Jesus as a separate and subordinate being, of similar but not identical substance (*homoiousion*), has been widely held by the forerunners of modern Unitarians. The fact that Arius could truthfully appeal to Scripture and tradition against his opponent Athanasius shows that a belief similar to his had been the ancient and common view.

The Arians were at times very numerous, and they were often active in good works. Witness the missionary labors of

Ulphilas among the Goths (died 383). But Arianism was not a successful solution of the problem respecting Jesus' nature and rank. It neither saved the pure humanity of Jesus nor brought mankind into immediate contact with the infinite God our Father, while it subjected the Arians to the charge of worshipping a *creature*, — an intolerable situation. Unitarians a century ago largely held Arian views; fifty years ago this position had been generally abandoned. It is now held by few, if any.

VII Many early Protestants approximated the Unitarian
Reformation position, and four great men among the reformers of the sixteenth century set in operation forces in the religious world that resulted in a liberal form of Christianity. In 1553 Servetus (a fugitive from Spain, his native land; burned at the stake in Geneva, 1553, Calvin consenting) published his "Restoration of Christianity," a plea for a simplification of the Christian faith. It was not a profound work, but it provoked discussion and stimulated more rational thinking. Faustus Socinus labored in the same general direction — a disciple of Lælius Socinus, his uncle (both Italians). He spread his views widely in Poland (1575-1604), where they flourished for about a century, but were finally stamped out with great cruelty. About 1560, Francis David established even more radical doctrines, in Transylvania, where the movement which he inaugurated still survives. His disciple, John Sigismund, gave the people a charter of religious liberty (1568) — one of the first and greatest documents of religious freedom.

The prominence of Lælius and Faustus Socinus in this movement for a more rational interpretation of Christianity gave the name *Socinian* to those who denied the absolute deity of Jesus and the total depravity of man, and affirmed the unity of God and a spiritual, rather than a sacrificial, interpretation of Jesus. The name, however, has long since ceased adequately to describe Unitarians.

Arius, Servetus, and Socinus had this in common, — they denied the dogma of the Trinity. But we must note these differences: Arius dealt only with the rank and nature of Jesus, making him an intermediate being between God and man. Servetus was a free lance, somewhat erratic and wholly critical. He made Jesus not so much a separate being as a peculiar manifestation of God. Socinus effected a more positive and comprehensive reconstruction of Christianity. He was more humanitarian in his view of Jesus than the others, looking upon him, not so much as a unique being, as a “divine man.” He also denied total depravity, vicarious atonement, and endless punishment.

VIII

England

By 1600 these liberal views began to take hold of some thoughtful minds in England. Some English Liberals were, however, Arians rather than Socinians. But anything like a popular movement in this line was made impossible by cruel measures of repression. Unitarian literature was burnt, and denial of the Trinity was made punishable by death. In 1662, John Biddle died in prison from starvation under charge of teaching against the trinitarian doctrine. The last heretics to die as martyrs in Great Britain were Unitarians. Unitarians were not properly recognized by law in England until the year 1813, when the penalties attaching to disbelief in the Trinity were abolished. And yet, three of the greatest Englishmen of the seventeenth century were Unitarians of the Arian type — John Milton, Sir Isaac Newton, and John Locke.

During the eighteenth century, there was a broadening of religious thought among certain Presbyterian churches in England, — those whose chapels were held on “open trusts,” not tied to a fixed creed, like the Presbyterian churches in Scotland; and by the middle of the century some of them had come to be Unitarian in belief. Joseph Priestley (Socinian rather than Arian), the discoverer of oxygen, was minister of one of these churches in Birmingham (1780). His work on the “Corruptions of Christianity” (1782) exerted a

wide influence. In 1774, Rev. Theophilus Lindsey (formerly an Episcopal clergyman) established a Unitarian chapel in London (where the Unitarian Headquarters are now located — Essex Hall). To this nucleus slowly gravitated many of these Presbyterian and other progressive churches.

The movement now had a centre and a name. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association was organized in 1825. In connection with this movement during the past century, small in numbers and cramped by many forms of intolerance and persecution, we find the names of such hymn writers as Sir John Bowring ("In the Cross of Christ I Glory") and Sarah Flower Adams ("Nearer, my God, to Thee"); such leaders among women as Frances Power Cobbe, Florence Nightingale, Mary Somerville, and Mary Carpenter; such scientists and scholars as Sir Charles Lyell, Dr. William B. Carpenter, Francis W. Newman, Samuel Davidson, Stopford A. Brooke, and James Martineau, — a group of immortals out of all proportion to the size of this religious body!

IX The seeds of Unitarianism were brought over to
America America in the Mayflower. They were planted wherever a church was organized in New England with a *covenant* instead of a *creed*. The successive steps of growth are indicated by the following names and dates:

In 1715 Rev. John Wise, of Ipswich, Mass., the father of American Democracy, published a powerful and popular book, "Government of the New England Churches," which was a stirring plea for democracy, progress, and reason in religion. It insisted on the absolute independence of the local church, — a pure Congregational Polity, in contrast with Presbyterian and Episcopal hierarchies. It effectually kept the door open for growth and progress. This made it possible for Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Gay, ordained pastor of the First Parish in Hingham, Mass., 1717, to advance to a Liberal Theology a few years later and still keep his pulpit. Others advanced along the same line.

About 1740 Rev. Dr. Charles Chauncy, minister of the First Church, Boston, led the broadening religious thought of the time in a work, "Seasonable Thoughts," directed against Jonathan Edwards and the revivals of the day. Later (1784) he published a notable book, "Salvation of All Men," one of the most forcible affirmations of the "Largest Hope" ever printed.

Soon after the close of the Revolution many ministers of the old First Parishes (Congregational churches) in Eastern Massachusetts had come by quiet growth to occupy Unitarian ground. They had abandoned the Trinity for the Fatherhood of God, total depravity for the native capacity of man, the teaching of dogma for emphasis on righteousness, the deity of Christ for the divinity of Jesus; and, using the Bible more rationally and spiritually, they rescued the humanity of Jesus from neglect, interpreted religion as the spirit of a noble life, and advocated freedom and growth. Unitarianism was now *in the air*, partly as the result of the liberal thought imported from England and France, partly as the product of the culture of Harvard College, but chiefly as the natural outcome of the principles inherent in New England Puritanism.

The first overt act was, however, the ordination of James Freeman, a decided Unitarian, as rector of King's Chapel, Boston (1787), — the first Episcopal church established in New England. The ritual of the church was modified by the excision of Orthodox phrases and the parish became Congregational or independent. In 1796, in Philadelphia, under the influence of Priestley, who had fled to America to escape violent persecution, a distinctly Unitarian church was established. When Henry Ware, known to be a decided Liberal, was appointed (1805) professor of divinity at Harvard, the separation among the New England churches and ministers began in earnest. Two parties, Orthodox and Unitarian, were soon arrayed against each other in theological debate. In the score of years following, nearly all the old churches in Boston and many of the First Parishes in that vicinity became Unitarian in

theology, but without changing their name or organization ; and they remain to this day the leaders in all Unitarian activities. During these years a great teacher came forth, Rev. Dr. William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), minister of the Federal Street Church (now Arlington Street), Boston ; and his sermon at Baltimore in 1819, at the ordination of Jared Sparks, became the Unitarian Declaration of Independence. In 1825 followed at Boston the organization of the American Unitarian Association.

X At the present date there are in America about
Present
Unitarian four hundred and fifty Unitarian churches, a major-
Churches ity being east of the Hudson river, and many of these latter being the original churches of the early settlers, like those at Plymouth, Salem, Boston, Watertown, and Cambridge. In Great Britain and Ireland there are about four hundred churches in the Unitarian fellowship, with various names — Presbyterian, Free Christian, General Baptist, Non-subscribing as well as Unitarian. In Transylvania, with Kolozsvár as a centre, there are some one hundred and twenty-five Unitarian congregations.

XI There are many religious bodies in general sym-
Similar pathy with the Unitarians who do not take our
Movements name. The Universalist churches in America are almost identical with the Unitarian in religious position and theological teaching. The Hicksite Quakers and Progressive Friends, carrying out the spirit of William Penn (who forcibly opposed trinitarian and dogmatic Christianity in "Sandy Foundation Shaken," 1668) are in general harmony with the best Unitarian thought. The Liberal Protestants in France and Switzerland have practically the same beliefs. In Germany there are many Liberals among Lutherans and Evangelicals, associated in the *Protestanten Verein*, who are in general agreement with Unitarian views. The progressive movement among the Jews, Reformed Judaism, is in substantial accord with the Unitarian spirit. There is a large and influential party in Holland, with the University of Leiden as its centre

of culture, which is Unitarian in everything but name. The Brahmo Somaj of India, a noble band of Theists who represent the advance guard of religious progress in that land, are in closest fellowship with English and American Unitarians.

XII

Friends Without the Camp

It would be easy to make a long list of eminent men and women from all parts of the world who have shown great appreciation of the Unitarian movement or who have occupied a similar position.

Dean Stanley, of Westminster, wrote some twenty years ago : "The Unitarian church, including within itself almost all the cultured scholarship of America in the beginning of this century, was unquestionably at the summit of the civilized Christianity of the western continent."

The great Spanish reformer and statesman, Castelar, made this declaration : "The simple religion of the future will be a religion whose dogmas are summed up in the two fundamental ones of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, completed by the purest morality, which breathes forth a disinterested love of goodness for its own sake," — precisely the spirit and ideal of Unitarians.

Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, used these words to Professor Kovacs, his fellow-countryman, a Unitarian : "I rejoice over your connection with the English and American Unitarians. Spread their ideas and faith as widely as you can in Hungary. Their faith is the only faith which has a future ; the only one that can influence the intelligent and interest the indifferent."

Prof. David Swing represented a large multitude who have never taken our name but who share our general views of religion and life. His own words were just what are preached from every Unitarian pulpit : "From such a dark estimate of God and Christ as this old notion [of Calvinism] involves, it is sweet to return to the thought that the law of salvation by morality is not a lottery, but, like the law of industry, it lies open for all."

The interpretations of life and religion set forth in the great works of fiction by George Eliot and Mrs. Humphry Ward — the greatest novelists among women — are essentially Unitarian. Both of these distinguished authors have been very closely associated with the Unitarians. Many eminent clergymen in Scotland, nominally Presbyterian, practically occupy our ground, — such men as Rev. Dr. George Macdonald in his stories, Rev. Dr. Robert H. Story in his sermons, and Rev. Dr. Walter C. Smith in his poems. Two of the greatest literary influences during the last century among English-speaking peoples were Thomas Carlyle and Matthew Arnold; and both, while they cannot be called Unitarians, were, in the essence of their messages, really pleading for the things central in our Gospel. Three of the men who, in various ways, have most adorned and enriched the life of the Orient in recent years have been our approving friends, — Ram Mohun Roy, founder of the Brahmo Somaj, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, the celebrated Parsee philanthropist, and Yukichi Fukuzawa, “the grand old man” of Japan.

The four men, all profoundly religious, who were the greatest interpreters of human life among our poets during the nineteenth century were in general harmony with our spiritual ideals, — in fact, their words have contributed to the making of modern Unitarianism, — Goethe and Victor Hugo, Browning and Tennyson. We would not try to narrow these great geniuses to any sectarian position; but we do claim that the great essentials in their messages are the things that we emphasize. *and deal*

Count Tolstoi, the greatest living literary genius at the present time, has recently given expression to the following views: “It is true I deny an incomprehensible Trinity and the fable regarding the fall of man, which is absurd in our day. It is true I deny the sacrilegious story of a god born of a virgin to redeem the human race. But God-Spirit, God-Love, God the sole principle of all things, I do not deny.

I believe in eternal life, and I believe that man is rewarded according to his deeds here and everywhere, now and forever. I believe that the will of God was never so clearly, so precisely explained as in the doctrine of the man Christ. But one cannot regard Christ as God, and offer prayers to him, without committing the greatest sacrilege." This is really a summary of the Unitarian faith.

II. CHARACTERISTICS

I. COVENANTS NOT CREEDS

UNITARIANS in America use as the basis of their churches a *covenant*, the declaration of a spiritual purpose, or a life promise. Their bond of union is not a creed,—a set of beliefs,—but a statement of religious motives. In this they follow the early Congregational Polity, or method of church organization, which was formulated by Robert Browne in England, late in the sixteenth century, adopted by the English Independents, brought over to this country by the Pilgrims, and used by the original churches in New England. The covenant of the Pilgrim church at Plymouth (adopted in 1602 before leaving England for Holland) is substantially as follows :

"We, the Lord's free people, join ourselves by a covenant of the Lord, into a church estate in the fellowship of the Gospel, to walk in all his ways, made known or to be made known unto us, according to our best endeavors."

That of the church in Salem, Massachusetts, the first Protestant church organized in America (1629), is similar : —

"We covenant with the Lord, and one with another, and we do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in all his ways according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in his blessed word of truth."

Several very important facts are evident at a glance :
(1) Though these people were Calvinists, they did not make

their Calvinistic beliefs the basis of their church organization or the test of their Christian fellowship. (2) This is not a promise to believe alike, but a promise to help one another to live better: "to walk together," not to think alike, — a simple and spiritual *covenant*, not a *creed*: an aspiration of the soul, not a theological confession. (3) These men of sturdy faith *left the door open for progress*. The anticipation of growth, and the expectation of larger wisdom, speak in every phrase of these covenants. Here we find the guarantee of liberty and the pledge of growth.

In after years, dogmatic and reactionary leaders in many New England churches overlaid these covenants with elaborate creeds. But on the rise of Unitarianism, nearly a century ago, those creeds were abandoned by these liberal churches and emphasis was laid once more upon the original covenants. The Plymouth and Salem churches, and many others, which have long been Unitarian in thought and fellowship, still have their original organization with the first covenants unchanged.

It is interesting to note that two of the most significant events in religious affairs in America during recent years represent a movement in the same direction. The Old South Church (Trinitarian Congregational), Boston, has set aside its outgrown and dogmatic creed and substituted in its place a simple covenant. Even Andover Seminary, founded (1807) to oppose and demolish Unitarianism, no longer demands that its professors subscribe its drastic theological confession. It is satisfied with a less dogmatic view of Christian faith.

Unitarians ask no one to sign a creed, because they affirm that dogmas are neither central in religion nor essential to salvation; and also, because it is wrong to tie the mind to finalities when progress is the true law of life. They do not reject creeds because they believe so little. They believe so much that they do not attempt to define and confine their faith within narrow and rigid bounds. The use of a creed (though it may contain many elements of truth) injures reli-

gion by diverting attention from reverence and righteousness (the essence of piety) to mere opinions that are often remote from life. This creed-system enslaves reason and arrests growth. It fosters duplicity and insincerity by leading people to pretend to believe what they really reject; to use old phrases in a new sense, misrepresenting the past and disguising the fresh revelation. And it also injures religion by tempting people to quibble about words and wear masks when they ought to be frank and explicit and clear.

Unitarians have very strong convictions; but they strive to keep them vital and practical by fitting them continuously to the facts of life as they are discovered. A creed is too often a tombstone set up to mark the point where men stopped growing. Instead of making truth authoritative, it turns the religious teacher into an apologist. Truth is no paralytic that needs to walk on dogmatic crutches. As in science, so in religion, life means growth, and growth means larger views and nobler sentiments. Fixed moral principles and an expanding theology go hand in hand as friends. Unitarians oppose creeds, not alone because they are wholly or largely false, but because the method is inadequate and injurious.

A covenant that is coming into increasing favor among us is the following: "In the love of truth and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man." All earnest, reverent, loving men and women can stand on this platform; and no narrower basis is adequate. The church ought to include all who desire to be good and to do good. We as Unitarians insist on strong convictions and positive religious instruction, but all this can exist without the use of a formal dogmatic creed.

2. BELIEFS

It must always be borne in mind that no answer to the question, "What do Unitarians believe?" can be an adequate description of the Unitarian Gospel. While we are great

believers, we insist that beliefs at best are only fractional, and often only secondary, elements of life; and we hold that religion is a life. We have beliefs that are very dear to us, convictions that are very powerful with us, but we stand for something larger and more vital than these beliefs and convictions.

Moreover, we hold that many theological beliefs, or speculations, are too remote from the motives and ideals of daily life to have any moral or spiritual value. We have aspirations, sentiments, and principles, that seem more important than our doctrinal theories. Certainly they are more important than the dogmas, like election and justification, which deal with metaphysical problems that are no more a part of vital piety than the atomic theory or the binomial theorem.

We can put no brief dogmatic statement into any person's hand and say: "If you believe this you are a Unitarian." Among Unitarians true piety is determined by a different measurement: "What is your life?" The briefest definition of a Unitarian is, "The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man applied." This language does not mean that we claim to be better than other people. We simply affirm that *the spirit of the life* is itself "religion." No particular belief about baptism or communion, the Bible, or even the rank of Jesus, by itself makes any one a Unitarian.

A description of the Unitarian religion deals only incidentally with speculative doctrines; and it deals with them chiefly to show that they are relatively unimportant. We go deeper into life and ask, "What are your affections and aspirations, your motives and ideals?" Here is the real religion. We need more clear thinking in religion as everywhere else; but it ought to be first of all clear thinking about the practical problems of the religious life.

Our chief aim, therefore, is not so much to impose opinions as to cultivate the spirit of a true life, to develop and enrich character and to lead people into helpful services. We do

not assume that our theories or motives are perfect ; but we feel that they include enough truth and nobility to save those who faithfully put them into practice. All that we can ask is that every one shall live according to his best conviction ; this is the demand of God upon all. And we most heartily grant that those who differ with us possess large elements of precious truth, — sufficient for their need if they are loyal to it.

Among Unitarians, differences of belief cause no bitterness and occasion no censure. But just because we are so free to handle the facts of life, nearly all of us reach nearly the same conclusions. There is among us that general agreement on essentials that is found in the realms of science. It is, however, a unity in diversity rather than a formal uniformity of opinion. And as among scientists, so with us, those who differ with us are not "heretics," but beloved fellow-workers, whom we are to instruct or from whom we are to learn. In view of these facts, no one can make an "authoritative" statement of Unitarian affirmations that must be accepted as final and essential. We can only describe the religious convictions commonly held among us at the present time.

3. A PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT

It is well to remember that Unitarians constitute a progressive movement of religious thought and life. There is movement in all religious dispensations, even those most enslaved by tradition or most bound by creeds. Where there is life there must be change. There is progress among Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Catholics. But just at this point, there is a radical difference between us and many other churches. The changes which others resist, we welcome. The progress which they reluctantly accept, we most gladly foster.

Protestants in general assert and enforce a creed which is presented as a final statement of truth that one must believe to be saved. We put our emphasis on a method of discovery, being always on the lookout for larger and clearer views of

truth and duty. What seems essential to us is not any transient form of opinion, but the method of truth-finding by which progress is made continuous ; and what seems supreme to us is not any particular mode of service, but the sentiment of love which constantly creates more fruitful services. Conservatives defend the faith once delivered to the saints. In the conviction that God now abounds, and that his oracles are still open, we reverently watch the present heavens and earnestly listen to living voices for the revelation of a still more glorious gospel.

Dogmatists decry innovations and stand guard on the ancient walls built around the sanctities of piety by a Luther, a Calvin, or a Wesley. But Unitarians, discarding the rusty armor and leaving behind crumbling traditions, keep in the open field and on the march, feeling that no one is so safe or so strong as he who is in the pursuit of truth ; and feeling, also, that wherever men may tent that spot will be the abode of the living God ! We move forever onward, not because we lack appreciation of past worthies and olden symbols, not because we are disturbed by doubt and distracted by uncertainty, but because we have confidence in the unfolding process, as a divine process, and, also, because we have confidence in the leadership of love and truth, under which we march. Therefore we cease to be Unitarians when we cease to grow !

4. MORE THAN NEGATION

THE Unitarian movement is something more than a protest against the creeds of Christendom. If we destroy the old house of worship, it is to build on firmer foundations a grander temple. If we criticise a long cherished belief, it is to create one more in harmony with the truth of things and more productive of personal righteousness. We deny the less that we may affirm the greater. When Luther laid down the heavy load of mediæval superstitions he had more power than he possessed before ; he possessed himself, with freedom to use

his strength in more fruitful fashion. The lad who goes away to school loses the petty notions of his neighborhood, but he gains the light and glory of a broad horizon.

Our affirmations of religious truth may seem very harmful to piety when first heard by many people, because apparently destructive to their long-cherished opinions. But let it be remembered that it is impossible to preach salvation by character without sweeping aside the theory of sacrificial atonement. To proclaim that God is a divine Father to all his children is a larger and more positive view of Providence than the theory of Calvin; and yet, it is absolutely destructive of Calvinism.

It is sometimes carelessly said that we believe little and that our teaching is negative. We do reject many things long considered necessary to salvation, but we do this because we really believe vastly more than our fathers did. We are not living in the eclipse but at the dawn of rational faith. We believe so absolutely in God as goodness that we claim that more than a small fraction of mankind will be saved. We believe so profoundly in the moral law that we hold that only holiness is blessedness. We believe so mightily in the sincerity of Providence that we teach that it is a thousandfold better to bear our own cross than to hide behind the cross of Jesus. We believe so fully in human nature that we assert that it was capable of producing Jesus of Nazareth.

We are not Unitarians because we reject the dogma of the Trinity; we are Unitarians because we have put ourselves under the command of reason and have accepted the modern discoveries of the unity in things and souls. Our disbelief in the trinitarian formula is merely incidental to our sublimely positive convictions respecting God and man. It is what we have discovered about the universe that discredits the Nicene creed. We have therefore put aside this formula, not because it is wholly false and not because we have lost our faith in the Almighty, but because the old words do not adequately describe our thought of the immanent God.

We are not Unitarians because we deny the deity of Jesus ; we are Unitarians because we believe in the unity of history and the divinity of human nature ; and these larger and more positive views of Providence compel us to think of Jesus as infinitely grander and more helpful than a mystical "God-Man."

We are not Unitarians because we set aside the theory of Scriptural infallibility ; we are Unitarians because we trace the revelation of truth and the incarnation of divinity so widely throughout the evolution of humanity that we are able to affirm the universal Fatherhood of God, and having reached this mount of vision, every dogma that denies the immanence of God in all souls seems a profanation, and every creed that implies finality in a text seems a rejection of the living God. We do not reject the Bible ; we only reject those irrational uses of the Bible that seem to us to banish God from the present world.

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES

I THE position most peculiar and fundamental to
Human Unitarians is the view of man himself. We build
Nature our religious ideals, methods, and hopes on the demonstrable facts of human nature. We begin with facts of human experience and find in them the revelation of a way of life and the demonstration of a divine Fatherhood. We go to the naturalist and accept what he has discovered respecting the origin of man. We go to the psychologist for instruction upon the nature of the soul, — the evolution of conscience, the scope of imagination, the power of sentiment; the authority of reason. We go to the historian and learn what humanity has achieved, tracing the onward sweep of civilization, with law, literature, art, government, commerce, science, and religion. We go to the educator and discover how intellect and heart are trained and unfolded. We go to the philanthropist and watch the creative methods by which defectives and criminals

are improved and reformed. We go to the student of comparative religion, and listen while he reads from out all the Bibles of the race noble commands for purity, sweet messages of hope, and tender prayers of trust. We listen also as he describes rites and symbols by which the spirit of man has pictured and cultivated the feeling of reverence and the passion for holiness.

We gather all these facts from the widest circle of experience, and in the light of these truths we affirm that man is a spiritual being, the outcome of nature's highest creative impulse. A being, imperfect but progressive, with native capacity for the discovery of truth, for moral development, for religious feeling, and for the outgrowth of sin.

We accept this truth respecting human nature as the basis and starting point of our religious doctrines and methods. Man has been very imperfect, but he has stumbled on through ignorance and waywardness, sorrow and superstition to higher civilization and nobler character. There is in him more good than evil, otherwise his creation would be a horrible blunder, impeaching the wisdom and goodness of Providence. We discover that there is an essential unity in languages, customs, and institutions, because human nature is everywhere essentially the same. There is no real division of history into natural and supernatural.

To all men, some truth has been divinely revealed ; to no man has absolute truth been miraculously imparted. Everywhere men have loved, found, and incarnated in character and civilization some measure of the true, the good, and the beautiful. Sin everywhere and always brings pains and penalties ; but sinners from the first have repented and reformed, for the way out of sin has everywhere been open to all, and in all ages it has been the same, the turning of the penitent heart through divine disciplines to its better estate in purity and peace. Saints, too, have arisen among all peoples because the soul has an inherent capacity for righteousness.

Wherever we find man, there we find a religious effort commensurate with his intelligence and conscience. Man has a native impulse toward discovery, for his reason impels him to ask questions and find causes. He has a native sense of justice that reports and enforces the moral law ; and this ethical power enables him to turn from sin and live in purity and integrity. He has a native capacity for worship, and wherever he goes he builds an altar, at which he worships a divine ideal. From crude idolater to most spiritual theist, the soul feels after and finds somewhat of the common Father.

II

Thought of God

From this thought of man, we pass on to our thought of God. Our knowledge of man makes our conception of God clear and certain, however incomplete. Because we have discovered the soul, we must believe in God. The finite divinity resident in man reveals an infinite divinity in a Fatherhood from which it flows. Because we have an intelligence that discovers an intelligible order in the universe, we are compelled to affirm an infinite cause that is intelligent. This is the only way by which we can account for ourselves. That parental life which reports itself in us must be akin to that which is highest in ourselves. The conscience within us which reveals and commands moral law, by uncovering what is inherent in the universe and taking its authority from the Immanent Life, constrains us to affirm that the Power in which we live is moral. For, if otherwise, how could we have a conscience? How have a moral sentiment, unless there is a moral life abroad in nature upon which it can feed? As the eye proves the existence of light, so conscience implies the presence of righteousness in the cosmos, of which we are a part.

The love which overflows in our souls must take its rise from the mountain heights of Infinite Being outside ourselves. It could not move my breast with such awful and mysterious power, were there not behind it the pressure of the universe. It could not so fill and possess me were

it not a constituent of that Universal Life, in which my life is rooted !

Therefore, it is when we take our stand within the soul itself, and survey its sublime and varied elements, — its capacity to discover truth, revealing the nature of the distant star and laying bare the creative processes at work in the flower ; its ability to uncover moral law and also furnish motive power for hero and saint ; its marvellous creations of ideal, affection, and aspiration ; its sense of an Encompassing Divineness which pours itself out in a myriad forms of worship, — it is from these spiritual facts of our own nature that we rise irresistibly to the thought of a Fatherhood, from whom all this springs and by whom it is fostered !

Unitarians reach their belief in God by way of the soul. These essential factors, — thought, conscience, love — could not be in our life unless in the Universal Life. What is in the dewdrop is in the ocean. And when we survey human history, and see how the thought of God has dominated the mind of man, we must conclude that there is an Infinite Reality in the universe of which this thought is the report. It is unreasonable to suppose that such a persistent and prominent conviction should have no cause in the nature of things. This belief in God is given in the experience of life. It is forced upon us by the universe itself. We must accept it as grounded in reality, or admit that the universe is a deceptive phantom and our faculties false reporters. But science assumes that our reason is a faithful, if imperfect, discoverer of realities. If it were not so, there could be no science.

As, therefore, the pressure of the real universe constrains man to say "God," we must accept the report as true in essence however imperfect in form. And just because science traces everywhere in nature a rational order that implies intelligence and in history a moral order that implies a righteous Providence, we affirm an ideal of God that is best described by the one great word — "Fatherhood."

The thought of God is a commanding necessity of our moral and intellectual life. We cannot free ourselves from it. It is implied in the processes of thinking. We may deny the truth of this or that teaching respecting the Infinite, but somewhere in our interpretation of the universe this Reality will emerge under some name ; somewhere in our explanation of life will the parental Verity be assumed. It is a thought in constant flux ; for life itself, to whose varying limits it is evermore fitted is an evolution. But while variable in form, it is perpetually present in some form, sometimes wearing a human disguise and sometimes under cover of negation itself. For often we outgrow our real atheism by leaving behind ancient ideals of deity.

The necessity is not so much, however, that we say "God," as that we make the word mean something worthy Him whom it symbolizes and spiritually helpful to him who uses it. It is a sublimely inspiring word if it is made to comprehend the sublimity of truth and the inspiration of love. But we may lift up reverent hands in the elaborate worship of a vast temple, and yet be near the verge of atheism if we limit the family of God to those who worship in that place. What we need as a tonic atmosphere, in which to grow more divinely strong and beautiful, is a thought of God rooted in a trust deeper than texts, speaking in prayers that are more than petty petitions, creating a reverence commensurate with truth and goodness, inspiring a fellowship which embraces all that is human, and perfecting the hope of a heaven that is more than escape from penalty.

The richest fruitage of the spirit is a thought of God that links itself with all that is beautiful in nature ; that embraces all souls in its providential ministries ; that finds revelation wherever truth is discovered, and divine service wherever truth is lived ; and this thought of God, in the fulness of love and sympathy, casts out the atheism latent in every form of inhumanity.

III Revelation and the Bible

If man is what science defines him to be, and if the thought of God is given in human experience as described, then we must understand by "revelation" a process as natural as human life and as large as human history. All discovery of truth is a revelation of God and all progress of mankind is incarnation of God. And while some writings become Scripture because of the precious truths which they contain, they are neither supernatural nor infallible.

We accept and honor the Bible as the best of many similar Scriptures, but all were produced by the same causes and under the same laws. It is the most valuable religious literature in existence, worthy our constant and reverent study. But it must be read for increase of life. Its texts must be handled by the free reason, not to formulate a creed but to enrich character. It has no monopoly of truth.

The Bible contains some errors and many noble truths; numerous legends and much inspiring history. No statement is true simply because it is in the Bible, while all its teachings must be tested by experience and subjected to the authority of reason and conscience.

Revelation is a process that overflows texts, antedates Bibles, and outlives creeds. It lies back of all litanies; it lights up all symbols; it clothes the prophet with power; it gives authority to institutions. In this larger view, we lose the Bible as a lumber room for dogma, but we enter it by the new gateway of reason and find it a rich pasture-land for the free soul. We escape from it as a prison, to come back to it as a wonderful treasure house of spiritual things. We cease to use them to club doubt and bind inquiry, but we learn diviner uses: we pile its texts on the altar fires of the heart to create heavenly motives.

We must have a theory of the Bible which includes all the facts, and a use of the Bible subject to reason and conscience. The Protestant creed-makers did the best they could; but

with only one Sacred Book before them and only a very limited knowledge of religious history, their opinions respecting revelation and the Bible were necessarily as imperfect as a theory of botany based upon the study of one tree. Science demands that we study all trees and all Scriptures and make our theories fit all the facts. We need not despise the creed-makers ; we must not neglect the facts. We may honor the old scholar, while laying away his imperfect notion in the museum of antiquities, along with the stone axe. Any theory is injurious to both the Bible and humanity which claims for the Bible more than it claims for itself, and it nowhere lays claim to infallibility ; and any theory of revelation is inadequate which neglects the facts of universal religion ; while all uses of texts are harmful except those that make the soul alive to the presence of God and the hand active in helpfulness.

The Unitarian freely accepts all the assured discoveries of Biblical science and gladly adjusts his religious uses of the Bible to these facts, being perfectly confident that all this new truth will abundantly enrich piety.

IV Reason has been the discoverer and revealer from
Authority the beginning, as love has been the master motive
of Reason power ; and these are progressive elements of an ever-unfolding human nature. Reason cannot explain all mysteries, but it must be free to investigate them. It does not create religion, but it must be used to guide religious sentiment. It does not destroy piety, but only that which is false in the forms of piety. Unitarians demand the right to reason freely in religion, and they grant all others the same privilege. They strive to have, as far as possible, a perfectly rational religion ; and they use reason and conscience as the supreme authorities in religious matters.

The authority of tradition and text, of apostle and council, is simply the authority of some other man. It is worthy of respectful consideration, but it should never be put between

us and the living God. The assumption that the Apostles exercised final authority respecting beliefs and ceremonies is neither historically true nor spiritually helpful.

V If man is what we discover him to be, Jesus may
Jesus be explained as the ripened product of human nature without dishonor to him and with clearer appreciation of mankind in general. If we follow the first three and most reliable Gospels, we must believe in the humanity of Jesus. If God is what reason and nature reveal him to be, the assertion that Jesus was God is unthinkable.

The whole world is becoming more and more appreciative of the wonderful excellence and transcendent nobility of Jesus of Nazareth; but the modern mind and the modern heart are beginning to see and feel that the mysticism of the church which has centred in him and which has grown up about him is in many instances a most unfortunate denial of both the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of man as taught by Jesus himself and as reinforced by modern discovery.

An atheistic limitation has vitiated dogmatic theology from the first, — an unwillingness to leave Jesus in the sphere of humanity as illustration and evidence of the divine in the human. But just here, and only here, is still his providential office, — not to stand outside the race as a unique and mystical being, mediating between heaven and earth, but to stand within the race as the Witness of God in man by nature, in this way revealing the possibility that is ours, and also helping us to its realization in saintly character. Jesus has been thrust between the soul and God by the theologians as a supernatural agent in touch with only a fraction of mankind; but if he is to perform any continuing spiritual service for us, it must be by helping us through his example and the inspiration of his spirit to commune with God our Father through a daily life that is loving and lovable.

The traditional interpretation which insists that all of God walked forth on earth in Jesus, and that he is the only son of

God, is a most unfortunate limitation of God. It is the negation rather than the revelation of Fatherhood. The "only" son of God? Is Providence, then, a fiction, and the "Our Father" of the immortal prayer an impertinence? The "only" son of God? Is there, then, only one point at which divinity and humanity meet and flow together? This sweeps away the fundamental postulate of science that the Infinite Power is everywhere directly and perpetually resident.

The modern world, in its practical work, assumes an immediate association of human and divine. The educator has found a more adequate thought of God than that which limits sonship to Jesus; for when he penetrates any mind and makes, Godward, a demand for more life, it comes immediately from the fulness of Infinite Life. The educational method, everywhere supreme to-day, lays emphasis, not on the *propitiation*, but the *appropriation*, of God!

There is something infinitely more important than the acceptance of God *in Christ*: it is to honor, love, obey, and serve the divine Life everywhere present in human nature. The "only" son of God? How the achievements of the philanthropist, who actually unfolds the latent divineness of human nature without resorting to Galilee, rebuke this dogmatism that forgets God! Instead of teaching that all of God walked forth in Jesus and nowhere else, let us rather affirm that somewhat of God abides wherever man resides. Let us make some better use of Jesus than to construe his life so as to shut out divinity from the human soul and outlaw as aliens all who have not known him.

Just here is the serious defect of much of the popular religious teaching of the present day. "The Christ," as a mystical being, is thrust in between the finite soul and the infinite Spirit. The fellowship of human and divine is broken asunder, man is left without adequate parentage, and God is denied immediate access to man. There is a failure of faith to find inherent divineness in human nature, to admit revela-

tion in all discovery of truth, to see a real Providence in all history, and to appreciate the incarnation as a fact coextensive with goodness.

The old mystical assertions respecting Jesus are offensive to the scientific mind and the humane heart, not because love of Jesus is lacking, but because the love of truth and humanity is greater. We crave a God who is at home in India as well as Judea ; who is present with the same love in Moslem as in Catholic ; who is as near to the repentant heart in Africa as in America. Every faith lapses into practical atheism when it becomes selfish, exclusive, and partial. Where, indeed, does God operate if not in all souls? How does man exist at all if not through heavenly tides of life sweeping every moment into receptive hearts? By what power did the Parthenon rise, Buddha heal human sorrows, and Socrates triumph in death, if not by authority of him who shepherds every soul?

As Unitarians, we love Jesus because he was lovable. We believe in him because he so faithfully lived the sublime truths of the moral law which he taught. We follow him because he revealed the true way of life ; and having realized in his own character what is possible for us, he inspires us to live like him and educates us mightily in righteousness.

But with all our love and reverence for Jesus, we would not assert that he alone is our teacher, or that he represents the only type of life worthy honor and emulation. We cannot do without him ; but we must not ignore the many saints and heroes who also reveal God to us and who ought to serve as guides and examples. As we need all the stars, so let us love all the mighty sons of God. Jesus does indeed reveal the love of God to us. But he is not alone in this. Does not the mother's love also reveal God's love?

Unitarians shun all dogmatism respecting the rank and office of Jesus, holding that the chief thing is to cultivate the spirit of his life. He ministers unto us most when he moves us to divine service. When we try to think of him as a part of

a mystical Trinity, he vanishes from us. To represent him as propitiating God is to deny his gospel. To assert that we can enter heaven only on his merits is to dethrone the doctrine of the divine Fatherhood which he preached. To do this is, indeed, to overthrow the moral law itself and also to miss the grand lesson of his life. We affirm that Jesus helps to save us only as he inspires us to fulfil the royal law of love in our daily lives.

VI It is astonishing and encouraging to note the
Humanity of rapid progress, during the last few years, of the
Jesus world of religious scholarship toward the humanitarian view of Jesus, long maintained by Unitarians. What was once damnable heresy now walks abroad as most respectable Orthodoxy. A great "book of testimonies" could be made similar to the following statements, which reveal this remarkable advance. And this advance does not represent less but more faith in God, not less but more love for Jesus. The lives of the men holding these humanitarian views respecting Jesus prove, by their increased spirituality and enthusiasm for religion, that there is nothing harmful to piety in them. It is not pretended that these men are Unitarians in all respects. Their words are quoted to show how rapid and general the movement of thought in this direction really is.

It was not upon his deity nor yet upon the perfection of his humanity, that his [Jesus'] disciples founded the Christian church. The men whom he gathered about him regarded him in neither of these aspects. They thought of him only as the Messiah. . . . He is not represented [in Acts] as a pre-existent, heavenly being, but simply as a man approved of God and chosen by him to be the Messiah and then raised by him to the position of Lord. Of the Pauline conception that he had returned to the glory which was originally his [as a being subordinate to God], we have no hint in these early records.

"Apostolic Age" (1897), pp. 31, 55. By Prof. ARTHUR C. MCGIFFERT, Union Theological Seminary, New York.

Since Jesus prayed, we must believe that he felt a *need* of prayer. He offered sincere thanks and sincere supplications for

the Father's help. He looked away from himself as one consciously dependent. He subordinated his will to a higher will (Mark xiv. 36). He secured inward quietness and strength by casting himself upon the will of God. Now in all these situations Jesus comes before us as a true man. There is the same creaturely dependence that we find in ourselves. Jesus did not have one kind of prayer for himself and another kind for his disciples. As he approached God with the name *Father*, so he taught his disciples to do. The prayers of Jesus can all be prayed by his followers, as far as their circumstances correspond with his. There is nothing in them that suggests a consciousness other than that of an ideal man.

"Revelation of Jesus" (1899), p. 169. By Prof. GEORGE H. GILBERT, Chicago Theological Seminary.

Read all the books of Christian devotion from the earliest to the latest, and you will find that what they dwell upon, when they are not merely repeating the words of the creeds but speaking in the language of religious experience, is that Christ is divine, *just because* he is the most human of men, the man in whom the universal spirit of humanity has found its fullest expression; and that, on the other hand, he is the ideal or typical man, the Son of Man who reveals what is in humanity, *just because* he is the purest revelation of God in man. . . . In truth, the attempts of theology to raise Christ above the conditions of human life, and to give him a metaphysical or physical greatness of another kind, really end in lowering him and depriving him of his true position in the religious life of man.

"Evolution of Religion" (1893), vol. ii. p. 233. By Prof. EDWARD CAIRD, Oxford University.

Another signal example of the ethical development of doctrine is found in conceptions of the person of Christ. The change has amounted to a recovery of his humanity. Until recently, the Christians of America and England, with the exception of the Unitarians, believed that Jesus possessed and exercised all the attributes of God. . . . But now, although there are many who retain the old view, the theologians, thinkers, and scholars of the church believe that Christ was under the actual limitations of human nature. In knowledge he was not omniscient. He gained information as other men did. He shared the opinions of his time as to the universe, and in other essential respects was truly

human. He had wonderful insight, but he did not have omniscience.

"Moral Evolution" (1896), p. 403. By Prof. GEORGE HARRIS, President of Amherst College. Formerly professor at Andover Theological Seminary.

The whole christology of the Fourth Gospel is radically different from that of the Synoptics, and indicates a long process of evolution. As we have seen, the Synoptic Gospels hold the view of Christ's Messianic character. He is the promised anointed one of David's royal line. There is no hint [in the first three Gospels] of a superhuman pre-existence, or of a Logos doctrine. . . . His [Jesus'] doctrine of God's attitude to man was that of a Father ready to forgive every penitent, not that of an offended Being who demanded a ransom in the way of a bloody sacrifice. Such a view of God is repugnant to him. The later doctrine of a mediator who comes between two parties that are estranged in order to reconcile them by the shedding of his blood seems never to have occurred to him.

"Evolution of Trinitarianism" (1900), pp. 291, 342. By Prof. LEVI L. PAINE, Bangor Theological Seminary.

A short time before his death, Prof. Max Müller, of Oxford University, published this statement: "What for us can there be higher than a man? Angels we have never seen, nor anything higher than man. That is what Christ himself has taught us; he calls us his brothers and the sons of the same Father. What can be higher? He does not claim for himself a nature different from ours. Take his own account of himself, 'I go to my Father and your Father.' We must not make him contradict himself."

In the "Encyclopædia Biblica" (vol. ii. 1901) there is a remarkable article on "Jesus" by the late Rev. Dr. A. B. Bruce, of the Free Church College, Glasgow, an eminent and conservative Scotch Presbyterian clergyman. The whole article is very broad, though somewhat timid and indistinct. This paragraph will show its modern spirit:

The words of Jesus concerning the future show limitation of vision. In other directions we may discover indications that he was the child of his time and people. But his spiritual intuitions

are pure truth, valid for all ages. God, man, and the moral ideal cannot be more truly or happily conceived. Far from having outgrown his thoughts on these themes, we are only beginning to perceive their true significance. How long it will be before full effect shall be given to his radical doctrine of the dignity of man!

This great work, the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, is itself a most promising sign of religious progress. Its leading editor, Rev. Dr. Thomas K. Cheyne, is a clergyman of the Church of England and a distinguished professor at Oxford. Its contributors are eminent divines or University professors. But the articles all represent advanced scholarship; some, like the longest and most notable on the *Gospels*, are extremely radical, more radical than the positions of many Unitarians. A rational interpretation of religion, including the humanity of Jesus, is everywhere implied or expressed.

* Prof. Adolph Harnack of the University of Berlin, who stands at the head of the scholars of the world in the department of church history, is a conservative student and a profoundly religious man. His opinions, therefore, carry the very greatest weight. He unreservedly admits, in a recent work, the truth of the proposition for which Unitarians have long contended, namely, that the deification of Jesus has no warrant in Scripture or in fact, but was due to his association with the Logos philosophy of Alexandria. It was not an original part of Christianity, but a slow growth beginning in the second century. He writes:

The identification of the Logos [which had been thought of as an intermediate creative power or person between the Almighty and the Universe] with Christ was the determining factor in the fusion of Greek philosophy with the apostolic inheritance, and led the more thoughtful Greeks to accept the latter. Most of us regard this identification as inadmissible, because the way in which we conceive the world and ethics does not point to the existence of any logos at all!

Professor Harnack points out that the purpose of the Fourth Gospel (written at the beginning of the second century, but

not by the Apostle John) was to carry out the identification of Jesus with the Logos. Jesus was given a central place in a philosophy of creation, and this philosophy was provided with a personal realization or historical embodiment. This Gospel contains some noble thoughts and affords many true glimpses of Jesus, but his figure is more or less distorted by the mists of Greek mysticism; and the writing, as Harnack states, "cannot be taken as an historical authority in the ordinary meaning of the word." This assured conclusion of Biblical scholarship is of great benefit to religion in several ways: it frees us from mere speculations, which are now useless; it simplifies religious teaching; and it enables us to gain a clearer and truer view of Jesus.

The admiration of Professor Harnack for Jesus is unbounded, but it is admiration for a purely human character:

Jesus is certain that everything which he has and everything which he is to accomplish comes from this Father. He prays to him; he subjects himself to his will; he struggles hard to find out what it is and to fulfil it. Aim, strength, understanding, the issue, and the hard *must*, all come from the Father. This is what the Gospels say, and it cannot be turned or twisted. This feeling, praying, working, struggling, and suffering individual is a man who in the face of his God also associates himself with other men.

"What is Christianity?" (1901), pp. 126, 204.

Among the most significant "signs of promise" at present may be mentioned the admissions made in several of the books in the series of "New Testament Handbooks" now being issued under the editorship of Prof. Shailer Mathews, of the University of Chicago. Especially significant because these little treatises are designed for use largely by Sunday-school teachers, and we should naturally expect a cautious and conservative treatment of all these subjects.

For years, Unitarians have taught that the story of Jesus as given in the first three Gospels represents him as a real man in loving obedience to God with no claim to deity, that the Book

of Acts reports the belief of the original church as purely humanitarian, and that in the Fourth Gospel we have a theological discussion about Jesus which reflects a late and philosophical theory of his nature, with assertions of a divine rank which Jesus did not himself make. All these positions are now accepted by the writer of one of these books, as the following quotations will show :

"In fact, all the way through [the first three Gospels], the secret of our Lord's life is his communion with God. But just here also is the perfection of his manhood." Of the view of Jesus held by the first Christians at Jerusalem, even after his ascension, as described in Acts, it is stated: "In heaven as on earth he [Jesus] is commended, attested, exalted, empowered by God, but there is no hint of a more intimate relation. . . . The death of Jesus is not regarded by the early disciples as atoning or vicarious." The admission is frank and complete that in the Fourth Gospel we have a mystical doctrine about Jesus, largely speculative and unhistorical: "The proof that the Logos of the Prologue [John i. 1-18] is the Alexandrian Logos is that the *word* is here hypostatized."

"Biblical Theology of the New Testament" (1900), pp. 39, 53, 54, 183. By Prof. EZRA P. GOULD, Protestant Episcopal Divinity School, Philadelphia.

When it is admitted that theological mysticism rather than historical accuracy is foremost in the Fourth Gospel, the way is cleared for the humanity of Jesus and a more ethical use of his name. And it is just this admission that is clearly made in another work belonging to this series, the best book so far printed in the English language on the subject which it discusses. The language is this (referring to the Fourth Gospel) :

"The work as a whole [is] adapted to the author's purpose of theological exposition and interpretation, in a manner wholly incompatible with the clear, historical recollection of an eye-witness. . . . The outline of the career of Jesus is sketched in a manner not merely out of harmony with the triple tradition [of the first three Gospels], but irreconcilable with the historical situation, and with the narrative itself." In other words, the largely

unhistorical Christ of the Fourth Gospel must be surrendered and we must go 'back to the first three Gospels for the real Jesus. When this is done, the mystical God-Man vanishes and we find ourselves in the presence of a real man, who is vastly more lovable and helpful.

"Introduction to the New Testament" (1900), pp. 252, 260. By Prof. BENJAMIN W. BACON, Divinity School, Yale University.

VII
Minor Matters
Respecting
Jesus

We need give only brief attention to a few subjects: The stories of Jesus' *miraculous birth* are poetic legends similar to those that have grown up around many other great historic characters. They reflect and report the deep impression which he made and the noble spirit which he displayed in his life. Jesus was undoubtedly born at Nazareth, the child of lawful wedlock, Joseph being his real father, as Mary herself declared, Luke ii. 48.

It is needless to spend time in these days in discussing the accounts of wonders wrought by Jesus. They were not, to the people then living, what we call *miracles* (violations or suspensions of natural laws); for the scientific conception of nature as a reign of law did not then exist. Jesus probably had remarkable power over people sick in body and mind. From this nucleus of fact, the poetic tendency of the time, under the influence of Scripture (especially the so-called Messianic passages), produced these stories which bear the water-marks of the age in which they sprang up. As Jesus himself invented parables freely to convey his lessons, so his disciples wove these parables about him to symbolize and publish their beliefs in reference to him. This is the general conclusion which the religious teachers of our day are rapidly accepting. When this position shall be fully occupied, then the real Jesus will shine with brighter light and religion will work with greater power.

Jesus was in no strict sense the fulfilment of the so-called Messianic predictions of the Old Testament, which vary widely in character, while only a few relate to a personal Messiah. He was not the *Messiah* foretold or expected. He was

immeasurably greater, — a sublimely original character, rooted in Judaism but transcending Judaism.

The *crucifixion* of Jesus is the most pathetic and inspiring event in human history. It is the revelation of the divine capacity of human nature and the demonstration of Jesus' spiritual heroism. The cross is not the scene of a payment for our sins, but the evidence of what the soul can achieve; not a screen to hide our sins from God, but a source of inspiration helping us to outgrow our sins. The suffering of Jesus on the cross opens heaven to us only as it moves us to live the heavenly life, — to suffer ourselves that we may enrich the lives of others. The cross did not purchase God's love for us. That is a hateful and immoral doctrine.

There are insuperable obstacles in the way of believing in the *bodily resurrection* of Jesus. The first form of this belief was simply that Jesus was *risen from the dead* (not the "grave") and alive at God's right hand' (Acts ii. 22-33, iii. 15, iv. 10). The *sepulchre* legends grew up later. The belief in the resurrection of Jesus did not create Christianity. The love of the disciples for Jesus — the motive and impulse of Christianity — produced by his loveliness, created this belief, which worked itself out along divergent lines from incidents and experiences now beyond our reach. These varying stories at the close of the Gospels, photographed at different stages of growth, cannot be harmonized. All effort to this end is labor wasted. This conclusion, toward which reverent scholarship at present tends, does not degrade Jesus or destroy Christianity. It enables us to be at the same time scientific and religious, to accept modern discovery and also to keep our love for Jesus.

We cannot for a moment admit that the *blood* of Jesus made God propitious, or that faith in it releases us instantly from the punishment of our sins. This seems to us an immoral and irrational materialism. We protest against the sacrificial interpretation of Jesus' death. Jesus never intimated

that he must shed his blood to make God love humanity. When the early Christians alluded to his blood, they had his life in mind, for in that age "life" and "blood" were interchangeable terms. As Ignatius wrote (about 117): "Be ye renewed . . . in *love*, that is, the *blood* of Jesus Christ."

VIII

Jesus and Present Life

These and many other difficulties vanish as soon as we consider Jesus a purely human character.

The quotations just given, all point to this end. They multiply with geometrical ratio as the years pass. They illustrate the irresistible influence and authority of the facts themselves. Sooner or later all religious thinking has to be adjusted to reality. As soon as the facts in the Gospel records are held in the light of the scientific spirit, as soon as Jesus is put clearly on the stage of real history, and as soon as the laws of human nature are applied to this subject, only one conclusion is possible — the humanity of Jesus.

This is a result to be welcomed rather than resisted, especially by the friends of Jesus and the champions of Christianity. The scientist, to hold to Jesus at all, must fit him to the real universe of law and order. The historian, to keep his faith in human evolution, must recognize in Jesus a natural product of human and historical forces. The philanthropist, to find the largest helpfulness in Jesus as he tells his story to sinner and sufferer, must set him forth as one who reveals the promise and possibility of the human soul. Therefore, if religion is to command the attention of thinkers and vitalize the work of reformers, it must present a doctrine of Jesus that is human and historical. Just so far as the force of these facts is felt, — and sooner or later all must yield to it, — the humanity of Jesus must be accepted.

The point I wish to emphasize is this: In view of the testimonies just given, which report the inevitable trend of religious thought, we may confidently affirm that there is no longer need for more debate on this point. The old textual and dogmatic arguments are not only pointless, but practically obsolete.

This is great relief and gain for both conservative and liberal. The *humanity of Jesus* may now be assumed like the law of gravitation. It is fast becoming an essential part of the thought of the world. Having, therefore, put behind us the old notions, and having reached a wider outlook upon human life, we find ourselves facing a new field of opportunity in religion. The religious teacher may now devote himself to scores of more interesting and practical themes. He now has more time for the spirit and message of Jesus as they apply to common human experience. He can come down from the vague mysticism of the triune God and press home the pleadings and inspirations of Jesus to godliness.

The task at present before us is to work from this standpoint, and make the character and teaching of Jesus more vital and creative than ever before. We must use his educating personality to chasten every wayward activity and to unfold every dormant human capacity. We must bring to bear his self-control and self-sacrifice to extinguish the animal selfishness. We must apply his spirit to human society as an organic enthusiasm. We must present him as an infinite encouragement to every one in misery, temptation, and despair. We must bring his life to bear upon human hearts to make them pure, heroic, loving, and fruitful in every good work. We must lead men through him to the discovery of God as Father and the recognition of their neighbor as a brother. All the indications of the hour show us that this is coming. The real human Jesus will be more loved, honored, and obeyed than the Christ of the creeds.

IX The answer to the question, What is salvation?
Salvation is involved in the larger question, What is this universe? If we live in a miracle-universe, where God sits just above the clouds as a bookkeeper, making black marks against our names as we sin, and then rubbing them out if we will believe certain things about the sacrificial Christ, then the way of salvation is very easy. But no such universe as that

really exists. The whole scheme is the childish fancy of a far-off time. In the real universe our sins make their mark, but the sinner can turn from his sins. The Infinite Father is always at hand ready to help him repent. He does not demand satisfaction, but righteousness. The old scars cannot be hidden behind the cross, but they can be outgrown. Our sins are not debts for which some one must settle, but defects which we must conquer and outgrow. Jesus does not rescue us from the punishment of our sins, but he helps us shed our sinfulness.

When men believed in a miracle-universe they imagined that, after doing wrong for a lifetime, they could step, in a moment, under a faucet of supernatural grace and be washed clean, and, by pressing a button, an angel would come with a white robe, and, clothed in the merits of Jesus, they could go triumphantly into heaven! But that theological dreamland has faded away. No such universe exists. The way to heaven is always open before the sinner. But it opens through repentance and righteousness. It runs, not through the blood shed on Calvary, but through the spirit of love which Jesus sublimely illustrated on the cross. The angels are near to robe us in white if we live a white life from the heart out. The way of salvation in the real universe is the way of spiritual growth and beneficent service. Jesus is divine helpfulness to any soul so far, and only so far, as he moves that soul to live as he lived.

A Creator who needs propitiation is not Jesus' merciful Father, but a monster. When we represent God as engaged in imputing the merits of Jesus to sinners, and passing them into heaven under cover of his blood, we strip God of the attributes that make him worthy our respect and love. The teaching that God will accept belief in Jesus' self-sacrificing love for loving-kindness itself, is tainted with atheism. If God be God, he will not bargain with himself, nor allow us to hide behind the cross; he will help man to be the goodness which he demands and which alone is salvation! From such traffic at

the throne, which was the way of salvation described by the old theologians, it would be a relief to escape into agnosticism. Salvation is not a commercial transaction but the enrichment of life; it is not an escape from punishment but a growth toward perfection.

If man is what history declares him to be, there was no fall of Adam, and all the redemptive schemes rooted in that fiction become unreal and needless. If man is what education and philanthropy prove him to be, he has native capacity for progress, reform, and divine service. If man's needs are what our daily experiences illustrate, his way of salvation lies through culture, character, repentance, and self-sacrifice. If God is what the discoveries of science indicate, the talk about sacrificial propitiation is little less than profanity. If the declaration of moral science is correct that merit cannot be transferred by imputation, the scheme of sacrificial atonement has no basis in reality. If Jesus' teaching is true that God is a divine Father who simply demands repentance and righteousness, then salvation is the love and purity which all — Christian and Non-Christian — may possess. And if really a divine Father, God will give all human beings an opportunity to acquire some fraction of these saving graces, whether they hear of Jesus or not.

As Unitarians, we affirm the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that "character" is salvation. Purity, love, justice, reverence, and mercy are the essentials of religion. We are friends of God so far as we are forgiving, helpful, devout, and truthful. We are in heaven so far as we live the heavenly life. Our spirituality is our salvation. But here it ought to be frankly stated that *salvation* is not a term in common use among Unitarians, partly because they object to the false views of life so long associated with it (the implications of total depravity, captivity by Satan, and God's wrath), but chiefly because they feel that what man really needs is something much larger than *the mere release from punishment*, which has too often been the

main thought. They emphasize the necessity of turning from wrong-doing, but the most important duty is growth in wisdom and righteousness: the realization of one's divine possibility.

X As children of the living God, we feel the assurance of a future life. God gives man this immortal hope. It persists as an irresistible and indestructible conviction in the human heart. And as God gives it to man, he is responsible for its fulfilment. God does not give birds wings for flight and no air in which to fly. In yielding ourselves to this great yearning of the heart we lean on the integrity of the universe. God cannot be so cruel as to create in us a false hope. No just parent would raise an expectation in his child merely to deceive it. He who is truth cannot feed men upon lies. Our nature, the workmanship of God, compels this anticipation; we must trust it.

Our destiny will be shaped by the quality of our life. We shall import to that heavenly realm whatever heavenly things we shall have imported into our hearts here. The day of judgment is forever in progress, because everything bears fruit and makes a record. We always stand in God's presence, and at the bar of an infinite justice that is infinite love. The divine forgiveness follows the human forgiveness. We are forgiven in so far as we are forgiving, regardless of creed or race or time or place. This is the gospel of Jesus of Nazareth.

As this life is vastly more than a mere *probation*, we cannot think of the future opportunity of progress as simply a "future probation." But as the doors are open here for repentance and reform, we believe that this will be equally true in the life after death. He who has been our loving Father here, will not become a cruel monster the moment after the transition which we call dying. But it would not pay to sin to-day, if we should have a million chances to repent in the million years to come. We still insist that sorrow will last as long as sin lasts; and though the door of heaven shall forever remain open, no one can go in without love and purity.

An eternal hell is impossible in a universe that all belongs to God. To believe in it is so far to deny the Eternal Goodness. The object of punishment is not vindictive but disciplinary, not retribution but education. If the indeterminate sentence is a wise method for the management of criminals, it is a good policy for the universe in the discipline of sinners. The fear of torment is not the motive that creates heaven ; it may restrain an uplifted hand, but it never commissioned a Good Samaritan. There is surely no encouragement to sin in believing that God will continue to be as good as our own hearts, which would save all. The philanthropic men and women who work to-day to rescue every wanderer can no longer believe that the infinite Love who moves them to compassion will himself overwhelm the same wanderers with everlasting misery because of the sin committed during a fleeting moment or from failure to believe an abstruse dogma. And to say that God cannot save all because the human will may finally resist all his efforts, is practically to abolish God himself. It is to make man infinite and God finite.

XI
Sacraments Unitarians do not consider church ordinances as sacraments with supernatural saving power. They follow here the freedom of the spirit, insisting that nothing shall be done as a mere formality, sacred because ancient. Sanctity inheres only in utility. That only is helpful which educates the soul and represents a vital experience. In many Unitarian churches *Communion* is observed, but always as a purely memorial service, free from sacrificial reference or symbolism. Adult baptism is practically unknown, but the *Christening* of children is felt by many to be both beautiful and helpful, emphasizing in an impressive manner parental joys and responsibilities. There are some who feel that both these services are too closely associated with outgrown superstitions to be any longer helpful.

In joining the church (increasing emphasis is rightfully laid upon the ceremony), the new member signs the **Bond of Union**,

or Covenant, and receives from the minister the *Right Hand of Fellowship*. By the attendance of sympathizing witnesses and by appropriate remarks, this ceremony is made an impressive and helpful event in the life of the individual and the church. The young people of the parish are prepared for it by a *Confirmation Class*, in which (commonly during Lent) they are taught the principles and trained in the sentiments that constitute our religious movement.

OUR GOSPEL AS DESCRIBED BY OUR LEADERS

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

made this statement: "Unitarianism is in harmony with the great and clear principles of revelation; with the laws and powers of human nature; with the dictates of the moral sense; with the noblest instincts and highest aspirations of the soul; and with the lights which the universe throws on the character of its author. We can hold this doctrine without self-contradiction, without rebelling against our rational and moral powers, without putting to silence the divine monitor in the breast. And this is an unspeakable benefit; for a religion thus coincident with reason, conscience, and our whole spiritual being, has the foundations of universal empire in the breast; and the heart, finding no resistance in the intellect, yields itself wholly, cheerfully, without doubts or misgivings, to the love of its Creator."

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

briefly stated in the following words the five leading principles of the Unitarian religion commended by Dr. Channing:

- I. The Fatherhood of God.
- II. The Brotherhood of Man.
- III. The Leadership of Jesus.
- IV. Salvation by Character.
- V. Progress upward and onward forever.

JAMES MARTINEAU

gave this summary of the Unitarian faith: "We believe that when Christianity shall be reborn from its temporary eclipse it will rise again with two commandments instead of ten — the love of God and the love of man; with the beatitudes in place of the creeds; with a doctrine of self sacrifice of the human heart in place of a doctrine of atonement; with a belief in the incarnation of God in humanity in the place of the personal incarnation of God in Jesus Christ; and that by degrees when that day shall come, man will be united to his Maker by tenderer, deeper, and more powerful ties than yet have been known, and that religion will assert a power greater, more comprehensive, and more healing to man's differences than the world has ever yet seen."

PRESIDENT CHARLES W. ELIOT,

of Harvard University, has forcibly described in these words the conviction commonly held among Unitarians respecting Jesus: "He spread abroad, and commended to the minds of many men, the loftiest ethical conceptions the race had won. He vitalized them by his winning and commanding presence, and sent them flying abroad on the wings of his own beautiful and heroic spirit. In a barbarous age he was inevitably given the reward of deification, just as the Pharaohs and Alexanders and Caesars were; and his memory was surrounded by clouds of marvel and miracle during the four or five generations which passed before the Gospels took any settled form. The nineteenth century has done much to disengage him in the Protestant mind from these encumbrances; and the twentieth century will do more to set him forth simply and grandly as the loveliest and best of human seers, teachers, and heroes. Let no man fear that reverence and love for Jesus will diminish as time goes on. The pathos and the heroism of his life and death will be vastly heightened when he is relieved of all supernatural attributes and powers. The human hero must

not have foreknowledge of the glorious issue of his sacrifices and pains; he must not be sure that his cause will triumph; he must suffer and die without knowing what his sacrifice will bring forth. The human exemplar should have only human gifts and faculties. If these principles are true, the more completely progressive liberalism detects and rejects the misunderstandings and superstitions with which the oral tradition and written record concerning the life of Jesus were inevitably corrupted, the more will love and reverence grow for the splendors of truth and moral beauty which, as a matter of indubitable fact, have shone from the character and teachings of this Jewish youth."

BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM

THE assertion is often made: The Unitarians have never done anything to help the world. It is true that we have not done as much as we ought. And in discussing this subject we would not foster an unseemly pride or indulge in boasting. But we are willing to let the facts speak for themselves. The record shows that Unitarians have been fruitful in good works far beyond what could reasonably have been expected of them.

I Our American churches have never embraced more
Literature than *one two-hundredth* part of the population of the United States. If, therefore, our people have contributed one two-hundredth to the various beneficent activities of our country, our faith will show an average fruitfulness. Any larger proportion than this means so much extra credit. Let us then, from this point of view, consider a few facts.

On the ceiling of the vestibule of the Boston Public Library are the names of some score and a half Americans who have been most eminent in art and literature, in law and science. Of those belonging to the nineteenth century nearly *four-fifths* are the names of Unitarians — some hundred and fifty times

our proportion ! Chief Justice Coleridge of England, in making an address at a banquet when in this country a few years ago, referred to the American authors most known and honored abroad. Every one whom he mentioned was a Unitarian !

In any list of the thirty most eminent Americans in literature that may be made, we shall find at the head Emerson, and after him will come Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Bryant, Bancroft, Motley, Prescott, Parkman, Margaret Fuller, Miss Alcott, Channing, Julia Ward Howe, Thoreau, Hawthorne, — we will not include Whittier, although he and others, while not nominally Unitarians, yet held Unitarian views in religion. We can claim at least half the names in such a list, however made up, and these by far the most distinguished. Or, in other words, about a hundred times our proportion.

Another list of names could be made of those distinctly or essentially Unitarian, that would contain as many distinguished persons as could be found outside our fellowship, such as : Bayard Taylor, George William Curtis, Helen Hunt, Bret Harte, Henry C. Lea, Edwin P. Whipple, William R. Alger, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, O. B. Frothingham, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, John Fiske, Jared Sparks, George Ripley, Charles Eliot Norton, James T. Fields, Richard Hildreth, J. T. Trowbridge, and many others. And we do not mention here many eminent persons who will appear in some other line of activity. In the series of biographies known as "American Men of Letters," published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., *eleven* of the eighteen are the lives of Unitarians, not including the Unitarian Quaker, Whittier.

We have not been as active in sending preachers to foreign parts to plant churches as other religious bodies. But we have put "books of life" into the hands of millions from the logging camp of Maine to the miner's hut on the Rockies. We would not depreciate the work of others, for there are diversities of divine service ; but we contend that a church which has made it possible to put the poems of Longfellow

and the essays of Emerson into the sod house in Kansas has done as true and noble *missionary* work as was ever done by circuit rider. Both kinds of work were needed, and let each church honor the other's mission. We do not claim that the literary pre-eminence of these men was solely due to their Unitarian views, nor do we hold that Unitarians are necessarily especially gifted with literary genius; but it is fair to appeal to them as an illustration of what Unitarians have done for the world.

II In the "History of Education" by the well known
Education French author, Compayré, the two names mentioned in the chapter on the United States are William Ellery Channing and Horace Mann — both Unitarians! When we add to these the names of Elizabeth P. Peabody, the pioneer in Kindergarten work in America; William G. Eliot, our apostle of all the humanities at St. Louis and the founder of Washington University; Ezra Cornell, who made the institution bearing his name possible; Peter Cooper, who created Cooper Institute, a pioneer in its line; Jonas G. Clark, who created Clark University; Dr. Samuel G. Howe, the teacher of the blind; President Charles W. Eliot, who in reorganizing and developing Harvard University has done a monumental work for education in America, — we have at least a quarter of the names of those most influential in the educational progress of our land during the past century, — a number out of all proportion to our size as a religious body.

III Some of the activities along these lines have already
Philanthropies been indicated: but there are others to be added,
and Reforms and they may be represented by the following names: Joseph Tuckerman, the first in this country to organize charity work (in Boston) according to what we now know as approved scientific methods; Dorothea L. Dix, the world's greatest philanthropist among women; Henry Berg, who inaugurated the work for the suppression of cruelty to animals; John Pierpont, the fiery advocate of all reforms, but more

especially temperance ; Susan B. Anthony, Mary A. Livermore, Samuel J. May, names that represent some of the noblest efforts ever made for the higher life of the race ; Henry W. Bellows, who was the creative and presiding genius of the Sanitary Commission ; Edward Everett Hale, wonderfully fertile in suggestion, setting multitudes at work in many ways for human helpfulness. When we add Dr. Channing, who sowed the seed from which a world-wide harvest of humanities has ripened, we have ten in any list of the twenty-five names of the most eminent Americans belonging to this class. Nearly a hundredfold more than our proportion !

IV No civic movement, in our national history during recent years, has represented a higher moral impulse or been more beneficial to our political life than the reform of our Civil Service. The man who started this agitation, Representative Jenckes of Rhode Island, was a Unitarian. Rev. Dr. James Freeman Clarke and Rev. Dr. Henry W. Bellows (Unitarians) were for a long time the only clergymen of prominence who gave this reform earnest and untiring support. George William Curtis and Dorman B. Eaton (both Unitarians) shared, with Carl Schurz, the leadership of this great movement. The two men who were its most valiant and powerful advocates in the Senate for years were Hoar and Burnside (Unitarians). Though the smallest of churches, we have played the largest part in this vital reformation of our national life.

V In a work just published, "The Men who made the Nation," by Professor Sparks of Chicago University, the contributions of a dozen men to our national life are described. Of these, two were definitely Unitarian, — John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Four others held our religious views, — Benjamin Franklin, Horace Greeley (Universalist), Daniel Webster, and Abraham Lincoln, who, though not wearing the Unitarian name, defined his religious position in exactly the words in which our National Conference

describes its platform: Love to God and love to Man. It is universally admitted that Washington, though an attendant at the Episcopal church, agreed substantially with the religious opinions of his Unitarian friends, Adams and Jefferson. Two other Presidents have been Unitarians, — John Quincy Adams and Millard Fillmore. In the catalogue of distinguished statesmen who have held our faith, we find these, beside many others: Edward Everett, Charles Sumner, John C. Calhoun, and the great war governors John A. Andrew and Austin Blair. It is an interesting and significant fact that *nine* of the twenty-eight persons included in the "American Statesmen Series" (Houghton, Mifflin, & Co.) were Unitarians — vastly more than what could reasonably be called our share.

Among jurists of highest national renown may be mentioned Joseph Story, Theophilus Parsons, Lemuel Shaw, Samuel F. Miller, and John Marshall (the recent doubts raised in reference to his religious position on the Unitarian side are vague and trivial). We have here about a score of prominent Americans who would be included among the hundred most eminent public men in America. Many others, like Thomas M. Cooley, have held our views though nominally connected with other churches.

VI The mention of five names will show that we have
Religious not been destitute of powerful advocates of a most
Leaders spiritual and affirmative Gospel, — William Ellery Channing, called, by Baron Bunsen, "a prophet of the Christian consciousness of the future," whose pages are deserving a far wider study than they receive; Orville Dewey, the impassioned advocate of a most practical piety; Theodore Parker, "the Jupiter of the American pulpit;" Thomas Starr King, regal as a king in pulpit power and brilliant as a star in spiritual illumination; Frederick Henry Hedge, in whose "Ways of the Spirit" thousands have found peace and by whose "Reason in Religion" thousands have been delivered from doubt and superstition. We say it in humility, without boasting: We have

been only a small handful of people, and often accused of doing nothing for the world, but we are willing to match these religious teachers, for eloquence, spirituality, inspiration to philanthropy, and general influence upon the life of the nation, with an equal number of men produced by the largest churches in the land.

VII

Hymn

Writers

Unitarians are often condemned as cold and unspiritual. Many have lacked the gift of enthusiasm. This defect is, however, probably more due to the New England temperament than to the Unitarian faith. This form of religious sentiment cannot, however, be destitute of spirituality, for it has produced many of the hymns most popular in all churches. To whatever church we may go, if we look into the hymn-book there used, we shall find hymns by Sears, Johnson, Longfellow (Samuel), Chadwick, Gannett, Hosmer, Furness, Hedge, and others (to refer only to American Unitarians), — a fact which reminds us that, while we may have opposed much in the creeds of the other churches, we have made large contributions to their worship. This appeal to the *hymn-books* shows that what we have done to enrich the songs of the sanctuary is far in excess of our numerical strength. The proportion of hymns in general use and written by Unitarians is everywhere surprisingly large.

In 1892 appeared an attractive little book, "The World's Best Hymns," by Prof. J. W. Churchill of Andover Theological Seminary, a competent authority who would not, however, be likely to make a selection too favorable to us. The author presents nearly a hundred hymns, ancient and modern, that he considers most worthy of honor. Of those written in the nineteenth century, about *one-fifth* are the works of Unitarians, some *forty* times our proportion, showing certainly a reasonable fruitfulness in devotional poetry.

Recently tablets were dedicated in the Hall of Fame in New York City to twenty-nine distinguished Americans who had been selected for these highest honors by the votes of a large and competent jury. Of this number, the following

twelve, or eighty times our proportion, were Unitarians : Emerson, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Horace Mann, Peter Cooper, Channing, John Marshall, Joseph Story, John Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, and Webster.

This brief record of things done for the higher life of man, the common life of humanity, is not made for self-glorification. The object has not been to claim superiority over our brothers in other churches. We gladly admit that they can show a long line of saints and heroes. They, too, can decorate themselves with many illustrious names.

Our sole purpose has been to make it clear that Unitarians have been reasonably active in good works ; and that this faith cannot be condemned as unfruitful. The record proves that we have done a fair share of the work for the enrichment of human life and the amelioration of its miseries. This form of faith has not destroyed the humanitarian sentiment ; rather it has fostered philanthropic efforts of every kind.

The record in our behalf could easily be made much stronger than it has been stated. Wherever there are Unitarians they are active in all humanitarian enterprises. They generally take the initiative in many beautiful ministries, like the Flower Mission, the Country Week, the Free Kindergarten, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Organization of Charity. Many activities have not here been mentioned, and many distinguished laborers have not been named for lack of space. For obvious reasons chief attention has been given to past rather than present worthies.

In closing this brief statement, one important fact must be made clear : Unitarians, unlike many other religious people, always work upon the broad platform of universal humanity. We have given most liberally to hospitals, refuges, homes for dependents, and schools ; but this has never been done in a sectarian spirit or for denominational glory. We have never used our benefactions to advertise our creed, nor have we limited our charities to church lines. We have founded no

Unitarian hospitals. That has not been our ideal or method. On this account people in general are often not aware of what we have actually done.

SLOW GROWTH

SOMETIMES the Unitarian church is ridiculed because it is such a small body, and we are tauntingly told that our slow growth proves that our form of religion is unfitted for common people.

There is, perhaps, some dishonor in being so few in number ; and we have undoubtedly had some faults (deficient warmth and lack of church enterprise) that have done something to prevent a rapid growth. There is, however, nothing so abstruse in our teachings as to place them beyond the average intelligence. Ours is the plainest and simplest Gospel anywhere preached. It requires no great effort of head or heart to understand our affirmations. This is fully proved by the fact that thousands of the common people in all Protestant churches substantially believe with us to-day, as every one is aware.

The chief obstacle in the way of a wide acceptance of our views in the past has lain in another direction. It is this: Those who come to us have to *reconstruct* their religious opinions and ideals. This is always a difficult and often a painful process, — to take down old idols and set up new ideals. This task does require courage, patience, and thoughtfulness. To get rid of inherited notions and prejudices is a difficult work, more difficult than many can perform. But this must be done first. And when done the acceptance of our Gospel is an easy gladness. In a wide experience of a quarter of a century, both among college students and the common people, this fact stands out clear and impressive before me: The difficulty in winning people to the Unitarian position is not inherent in our doctrines. It is the *dead-hand* of Tradition. It is easy enough to explain our principles ; it is hard for people to rid themselves of prejudice and superstition.

But in a general way Unitarians have reaped as they have sown. We have grown slowly as a denomination because we have not sown sectarianism. We have exerted an influence out of all proportion to our numbers, as the facts in the preceding pages demonstrate ; and we have done this because we have striven to enrich the general life of humanity. We have had missionary zeal, but it has run to *nation-making* rather than *church-organization*. Unitarians have elected this larger service, not because indifferent to the church and destitute of love for religion, but because they saw so many other things to do that seemed more important than changing a man's theological opinion, and also because they have never taken a narrow view of the church as the *only* agent of salvation. They have loved religion, but they have loved it as something larger and deeper than dogmatic belief or ecclesiastical machinery.

If the energies that have gone into literature, education, and reform (giving us a harvest in these directions far in excess of what could be expected of us) had been applied to church extension, we should, as Jefferson predicted, have become one of the large religious bodies in the land. But these energies could not work in both directions. Our people were not idle, but their service was humanitarian rather than ecclesiastical. Therefore we must be judged by what we did in our own line, not by what we failed to do along the line of ambition so often followed by other churches. In the very nature of the case, a body suspicious of sectarianism and concerned about humanity in general, could not do great things *as a sect*.

The truth is, Unitarians chose to do a *national* rather than a *denominational* work, and they must be judged accordingly. While others were out on the frontier organizing churches, our best minds were writing the books that have enriched the homes and filled the libraries of that frontier. While others were giving their money to church enterprises, our rich men, like Amos and Abbott Lawrence, were giving their fortunes to help all other enterprises except Unitarian missions, even

endowing Orthodox colleges ! This was, perhaps, a mistake, but it was not done because they had no interest in their own church. It was because they saw so much to appreciate in all the churches ; and also they felt that there was something more necessary in the world than to force their personal theological opinions upon others.

While the laymen of other churches were laboring heroically to extend their particular Zion, ours, like Dorman B. Eaton and George William Curtis, were using all their energies to reform the Civil Service. Both kinds of work were needed, and the larger churches have done both ; but we gave ourselves so exclusively (perhaps unwisely) to these civic and humanitarian enterprises that little or no energy was left for church extension. And just because of this fact we are able to show a large surplus of national enrichment to our credit.

Suppose, for example, that Theodore Parker had used his splendid powers and vast enthusiasm to build up a denomination, as did Alexander Campbell. To-day we should have Unitarian churches by the thousand instead of the hundred. But he worked for other objects : for the freedom of the slave and for the intellectual and spiritual quickening of America. He practically sent out none to found churches ; instead he planted our land everywhere with young men and women who have been leaders in every philanthropic, educational, and reformatory movement. This certainly was worth doing.

Peter Cartwright sowed the Mississippi Valley with Methodist churches. This was a magnificent work. Thomas Starr King might have planted the seed on the Pacific coast from which hundreds of Unitarian churches would have grown. Instead he saved California to the Union cause. It was better so. The great enthusiasm of Rev. Dr. Henry W. Bellows, if devoted exclusively to church affairs, would perhaps have increased our denomination as fast, proportionately, as Bishop Simpson enlarged the bounds of Methodism. But he gave himself to the Sanitary Commission and helped

as much as any general to save the Union. This was worth more than a thousand new Unitarian churches. Thus we see that the chief reason for our slow growth as a sect is in many ways creditable to the Unitarians themselves.

But our growth as a church has not been as slow in recent years as many suppose. In the score of years from 1880 to 1900 the Unitarian churches in America increased 35 per cent, nearly as fast as the growth in population, — a ratio that compares very favorably with that of the larger churches. In the same period the contributions to the American Unitarian Association for missionary purposes have doubled. The activities of the Woman's Alliance, of the Sunday School Society, and the Post Office Mission in the free distribution of religious literature are probably over four times as great to-day as they were in 1880.

But the chief growth of the Unitarian faith has been within what are called the Orthodox churches. The leading thoughts of Channing are preached every Sunday morning in thousands of pulpits that are not Unitarian in name. The views of Parker, Hedge, and Clarke are substantially accepted by hundreds of the progressive ministers in all the Protestant denominations. Hardly a remnant of the old Orthodoxy is left in any prominent city pulpit. It still stands written in the creeds, but it has little or no part in the vital convictions of intelligent people. In the religious newspapers of the land, what have passed as commonplaces among us for years are constantly set forth as discoveries. Frequently an editorial full of Unitarianism stands side by side with a condemnation of the Unitarian church! Everywhere people boast of their liberality and their indifference to creeds, — admirable when done with sincerity. We, as a church, are not responsible for all of this, though we have done our part to bring it about. It is due largely to the "Time-Spirit." This way of thinking and feeling in religion is now abroad in the land. So that, while our *church* grows slowly, our *ideal* is becoming victorious.

On this account some carelessly say: The work of the Unitarian church is done! Yes, indeed, if its work was ever simply to destroy Orthodoxy as a creed; for the old Orthodoxy as a method and system of thought is dead. But no true Unitarian ever so understood or described the Unitarian mission. The task of the Unitarian church has been something infinitely larger and vastly nobler — the cultivation of a rational and spiritual form of piety for the enlargement of humanity in general. From this point of view, the Unitarian church was never more needed than to-day. The growing liberality of other churches no more ends our mission than does the growing enlightenment of the community make the doctor unnecessary. The need was never greater than at present for agencies of ethical quickening and spiritual training. The enemy to be fought is not dogmatism but worldliness. We must use our freedom to establish the noblest ideals in society and in politics.

OUR SUPREME ASPIRATION

I THE Unitarian strives to represent and embody in
New personal character and civic institution, the New
Christianity Christianity which is rising all about us and which is the simple but mighty gospel of Jesus, enriched by science and democracy, enforced by the philanthropic impulse, and operated through the educational method. It puts character-building above creed-making, deeds of love above dogmas of wrath, service above sacrament, obedience to moral law above belief in theological statements. It makes the Golden Rule central. It uses the Sermon on the Mount rather than the Nicene creed as the chart of life. It appeals to love instead of fear. It encourages growth and discovery rather than conformity of opinion. It pleads for brotherhood and co-operation. It insists on freedom. It uses the Bible, not to make a creed, but to enrich the life,

The New Christianity finds the service of God in helpfulness to man, the way to heaven in the path of righteousness, the sure salvation in perfected manhood, the only authority in love and reason, an adequate basis of religious organization in a common purpose to be good, and to do good: all truth its scripture, all men its field and fellowship, all loving souls its saints and ministers, a kingdom of heaven for all on earth its ideal and aspiration.

II We strive to make the Unitarian church the efficient
Unitarian agent and organic expression of the New Christian-
Church ity. We pour into its worship the warmth and gladness of an impassioned love for God, the Father of all. We keep our hymns and prayers free from selfish importunity, offensive exhortation, and doctrinal discussion. We make them the simple but earnest outpouring of trustful hearts, wholly intent on personal communion with our Creator. We would shun the trivial speech and flippant spirit that destroy true reverence. We would be free from the mournful tone and affected gravity that spread gloom without bringing solemnity. We would cultivate the dignity and the enthusiasm of a saintly but joyous piety. We would make our worship so catholic, so tender, so vital, that all, of whatever theological opinion, may feel themselves at "the east window of divine surprise." Then tears shall cease, burdens shall fall, and the ecstasy of pure devotion shall fill the soul.

In the pulpit of this church stands a teacher of sacred things to speak with absolute sincerity, with perfect freedom, and with forceful conviction. He will affirm more than he will deny, using most often words of comfort and of cheer. The pulpit is a watch-tower from which he scans the outer heavens and reports all discoveries that bear upon conduct. To it he fetches out of the depths of his heart, and applies to others for constraint and inspiration, all the spiritual and spiritualizing truths of his own experience. He uses all facts so far as he can make them into a gospel. He is a teacher,

but a teacher of right living, not intent on making converts to a creed, but anxious only that his message carry repentance to sinners, hope to the sad, and comfort to the suffering, as well as joy and inspiration to the strong and courageous. He administers the spirit of Jesus to enrich and ennoble human life. He tells that wonderful story to make men strong, pure, forgiving, and loving. He uses the Bible to make powerful in human affairs its great lesson of righteousness, — the righteousness of the heart that brings peace.

We insist that the church is a precious and paramount institution, because human nature is essentially religious. Religion is not only an important part of life, it is a part that needs wise and careful training. Therefore, those who neglect the church neglect what is highest in themselves and most useful to civilization. Indifference to religious nurture and church service is indifference to our humanity proper. The great spiritual gifts and graces, to cultivate which is the task of the church, are no more likely to spring up in us spontaneously than the mastery of a musical instrument or the command of a foreign tongue. If we are to gather the harvest, we must plant the seed and cultivate the soil.

We cannot have the beauty and serenity of life in home and neighborhood that are bound up with the Sabbath, unless we maintain the religious uses of this day of rest. And we make the best use of Sunday only when we use it to expand what is best within us, and spend its hours in a manner radically different than we do the other days of the week. We cannot possess and preserve the great moral and spiritual convictions and enthusiasms which make for peace and righteousness, unless we loyally support this institution — the church — created for the development of the religious life and consecrated to the service of the highest and noblest interests of the human race.

The neglect of the religious training of children is not only an injury to them but a sin against civilization. We are under a heavier obligation to give our children the **best religion** that

we have found than we are to have them correctly taught in music or mathematics.

III
The
Real
Unitarian

Out of this church, alive with various educational and philanthropic activities, all imbued with the religious purpose and devoted to religious ends, we strive to send forth into the world to be a part of its best life the real Unitarian, a man who demands freedom for himself and grants the same liberty to his neighbor; who bestows his love broadly regardless of sect, fellowships all seekers for the truth, and labors for man on account of his need rather than his creed; who follows reason as the authority for truth and conscience as the guide to conduct, allowing no text or tradition to blind the eye or enslave the heart, and always striving to be wiser to-day than yesterday and better to-morrow than to-day.

The real Unitarian is one who believes that it is diviner to do a deed of love than to subscribe to any form of doctrine; who holds that religion is spiritual worship, personal righteousness, and helpful service; and who learns from Jesus to be forgiving, merciful, and useful.

The real Unitarian is one who sees the universe under a law that is love, finds nature interwoven with Fatherhood, and beholds God immanent in all souls; who traces the divine revelation in all discoveries of truth; and who has faith that Providence embraces humanity, and that all wanderers will some day find their way home to the Infinite Goodness.

And these great root-truths and imperial sentiments, so widely shared in varying measures by others, being no monopoly of ours, will help us all to march forward through life, serene under abuse, patient in disappointments, heroic in danger, victorious in temptation, helpful with love and cheerful with hope in our little corner, feeling that the dear God is our Father, and that beyond the grave lies in immortal light and blessedness the household of our affections.

APPENDIX

LITERATURE

THE following works are historical, and they tell the story of the Unitarian movement :

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| I. A Short History of Unitarianism since the Reformation. | \$0.50. |
| Rev. Frederick B. Mott. | |
| II. Unitarianism since the Reformation. 254 pp. | 1.50. |
| Rev. Joseph Henry Allen, D.D. | |
| III. Old and New Unitarian Belief. 246 pp. | 1.50. |
| Rev. John W. Chadwick. | |
| IV. Unitarianism: Origin and History. 400 pp. | 1.00. |
| Lectures by Sixteen Eminent Unitarians. | |
| V. Heads of English Unitarian History. 138 pp. | .60. |
| Rev. Alexander Gordon. | |
| VI. A Historical Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Unitarian Christian Doctrine in Modern Times. | .10. |

The Unitarian Affirmations respecting religion are fully described in these books, — that by Channing is especially rich in other directions :

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| I. Channing, Works. 1 vol. 1060 pp. | \$1.00. |
| II. Parker, Views of Religion: Selections. 1 vol. 466 pp. | 1.00. |
| III. Dewey, Works. 1 vol. 804 pp. | 1.00. |
| IV. Our Unitarian Gospel. 282 pp. | 1.00. |
| Rev. Minot J. Savage, D.D. | |
| V. The Power and Promise of the Liberal Faith. 145 pp. | .75. |
| Rev. Thomas R. Slicer. | |
| VI. Positive Aspects of Unitarian Christianity. 274 pp. | .75. |
| By English Writers with Introduction by Dr. Martineau. | |
| VII. Forward Movement Lectures. 99 pp. | .40. |
| Rev. Brooke Herford, D.D. | |

These books can be ordered from the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass., and to this body may also be addressed inquiries in regard to Unitarian work and organization.

The following pamphlets (from 16 to 40 pp.) give the views commonly held by Unitarians upon the subjects of which they treat, and they are sent *free* on application to the American Unitarian Association, Boston, Mass. :

- (1) The Faith of a Free Church : Rev. S. M. Crothers, D.D.
- (2) What do Unitarians Believe? Rev. Charles W. Wendté.
- (3) Unitarianism. Rev. Rush R. Shippen.
- (4) Our Gospel. Rev. M. J. Savage, D.D.
- (5) Unitarian Principles. Rev. Edward Everett Hale, D.D.
- (6) The Main Lines of Religion as held by Unitarians. By Rev. Brooke Herford, D.D.
- (7) Unitarianism : it is a Positive Faith, and rightly claims our Loyalty. By Rev. Minot J. Savage, D.D.
- (8) The Church of the Spirit. By Rev. Francis G. Peabody, D.D.
- (9) God . . . Rev. Samuel R. Calthrop, LL.D.
- (10) The Real Jesus. Rev. Howard N. Brown.
- (11) The Bible in Theology. Rev. W. W. Fenn.
- (12) The Immortal Hope. Rev. John W. Chadwick.
- (13) The Theology of Unitarians. Rev. Charles C. Everett, D.D.
- (14) Incarnation. Rev. William C. Gannett.
- (15) Eternal Punishment. Rev. Thomas Starr King.

The Results of an Inquiry into the Aims and Characteristics of UNITARIAN PREACHING

By SAMUEL A. ELIOT, D.D.

THE RESULTS OF AN INQUIRY INTO THE
AIMS AND CHARACTERISTICS
OF
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BY
SAMUEL A. ELIOT, D.D.



BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

1902

The Results of an Inquiry into the Aims and Characteristics of Unitarian Preaching.

I.

I have ventured to believe that an inquiry into the aims and characteristics of the preaching in our liberal churches would not be without value. Accordingly, on Oct. 19, 1901, I addressed a circular letter to the ministers of our Unitarian churches, enclosing return blanks whereon might be indicated the subject, text, and method of development of the sermons preached on Sunday, October 20. The response enables me to present a reasonably complete statement of the results of the inquiry.

A few of my fellow-workers have failed to understand the purpose of my questions. The gentleman who declines to co-operate because "you cannot expect to find out from a single sermon what I am preaching about and how I do it," and the gentleman who derides "the foolishness of trying to discover the average of my preaching from one sermon," have mistaken the nature of the inquiry. My purpose has not been to inquire into the average preaching of any individual, but to set forth the characteristics of the collective preaching of a small and well-defined religious fellowship at the opening of the twentieth century.

Two hundred and ninety-two ministers have done me the honor to answer my circular, and these ministers have sent me the desired information about four hundred and nineteen sermons preached on October 20. Considering the tax upon the time and good-nature of the ministers, the number of replies is larger than I had dared to hope for, and is an evidence of the growing co-operative spirit in our fellowship of independent ministers. Occasionally a minister, after describing his morning sermon, adds, "In the evening I gave a Bible talk," or "I spoke on church attendance," or "I

discoursed from the parable of the sower." For these and similar reasons it has seemed necessary to throw out, as defective, the returns upon nineteen sermons; and I have, therefore, the comfortable round number of four hundred sermons upon which to base my estimates. It may appear to some minds that four hundred sermon abstracts is an inadequate basis for a study of the aims and characteristics of Unitarian preaching, but experience proves that the law of averages is as well satisfied with four hundred observations as with four thousand. Deductions drawn from a larger number of tests would not seriously modify the result. The basis of the investigation, while confessedly limited, is sufficiently ample to warrant accurate and reasonably comprehensive conclusions.

The returns bear ample testimony to their own trustworthiness. I cannot discover that any minister has written a special sermon for the occasion. The circulars were mailed, as far as possible, so as to be received by the ministers on Monday, October 21. No one was warned in advance, and no one had opportunity for special preparation. The honesty of the returns seems unimpeachable. In dealing with them, I desire to present simply a clear statement of facts. I wish to set forth, *not what I think Unitarian preaching ought to be, but what it actually is*. Almost all the ministers replying to my circular have been good enough to furnish me with briefs or abstracts of the sermons preached. How diffuse these sermons may have been in utterance I do not know, but the abstracts give evidence of power of condensation and cogency of statement. A few sermons appear to me to attempt to say too much. Too many subjects are introduced. Although the listeners may have been interested in separate divisions of the sermon, a clear and definite impression on the conscience and will can hardly have been made. But the great majority of these sermons certainly stand one important test of a good sermon; namely, that every listener should at least be able to tell what the sermon was about. The abstracts bear testimony to a judicious process of selection. The writers have a good sense of proportion: the great is not lost in the little; and the whole is not sacrificed to a part. The abstracts also give cause for hope that most of the sermons were reasonably short. A short sermon is

usually best, not only because it does not weary the listener and exhaust the capacity of attention, but also because brevity involves excision of the needless. A good preacher does not try to say many things, but to say a few things well. It is better to drive one nail at a time well home than to give random taps to a good many. These abstracts indicate that the sermons, as a rule, possessed the brevity and condensation which give this desirable unity. They possess the sense of order without which a minister can neither get into his subject nor get through with it.

In all the four hundred sermons there is not a single discourse which can reasonably be called *negative* in spirit. There are no apologies, no destructive criticisms, no scolding, no sneers at less enlightened or more orthodox Christians, no denunciation of the godless or the infidel. The listeners are treated not as adversaries, not as unsympathetic jurymen who must be persuaded and converted, but as co-operative friends. In varying degree, but with practical unanimity, each sermon is positive and constructive in spirit and treatment. The mission of these preachers is not "to destroy, but to fulfill." Unitarians have sometimes wandered from this path, but the inherent genius of their faith has always brought them back to the idea that their mission is not to antagonize other forms of faith, but to satisfy in a new way, the ineffable longings which those other faiths once satisfied, and to unfold and direct the religious powers which those other faiths are even now using for their fuller development. Instead of directly attacking outgrown ideas, usages, or institutions, the method adopted by Unitarians is to try to expunge error by teaching truth. The method of destruction fastens instinctively upon the evils in existing conditions, and tries to abolish them by external assault. The method of fulfillment discovers and emphasizes the good in existing conditions, and tries to complete imperfect thought and conduct. We may be sure that the latter is the nobler method because of the nobler powers it employs. It is easy to criticise and denounce, it is easy to abuse society for its superstitions, its conservatism, or its provinciality; but to take the latent generosity of a community, or an individual's half-conscious hope of better things and encourage it, to find the elements of good in the meanest emergencies and develop them, to

catch the indefinite desires and ideals of a man, or a nation, and direct and uplift them, that is hard and slow. The method of destruction requires a spirit intolerant toward error or falsehood, a keen sense of justice, and a vehement vigor. The method of fulfilment requires sympathy, patience, and hopeful persistence.

Again, in all the four hundred sermons there is not one that by any stretch of language can be called *sensational*. One sermon, indeed, permits the suspicion of spectacular elements. It is entitled "The Dead Kings in Sheol." The writer does not furnish an abstract of his sermon, but his name is a sufficient guarantee that there is nothing especially fiery in his discourse. His statement that his sermon was "literary" in treatment may be accepted as accurate. Unitarian ministers evidently do not expect to establish the kingdom of God by theatrical devices. They are not tempted to say things that are striking instead of things that are true. Their aim is not the people's applause, but the people's good. They do not find it wise or necessary to mix with their instructions or appeals a measure of nonsense or flattery, in order to suit the supposed popular taste. They believe that their hearers are able to bear the pain of thought, that they can follow a logical statement, that they will respond to a noble appeal. They do not forget what is due to the nature of their high calling, and to the dignity of the message they are to deliver. They refuse to be flip-pant. They do not believe in fighting the devil with the devil's weapons. They work in the confidence that, if they are but true to their mission and to their best selves, then, "whether men hear or whether they forbear, yet it shall be known that there hath been a prophet among them."

I shall now venture to give some general impressions of the characteristics of these four hundred sermons, and I shall then attempt to make a more complete analysis and classification of them. It must be remembered that in these characterizations I deal only with what is sometimes called "sermon stuff." I know nothing of the gifts of voice and bearing which are so important an element in preaching. I know not whether these sermons were delivered with earnestness or with indifference. Many a sermon that is

meagre and commonplace in thought becomes a powerful instrument for good because of the personality of the preacher and the sincerity and eagerness of his appeal; while many a sermon that is original in thought and skilful in construction loses all effectiveness because of a poor voice or a listless delivery. I deal here with sermon matter, not with sermon manner; with the sermon written, not the sermon preached.

(1) These sermons give me the impression that the writers had certain *definite and practical aims* in mind. They had the sense of a target. They had a mental vision of the exact points they wanted to hit. There is to be, that is, no aimless wandering and no expenditure of time and energy on unimportant details. Again and again in the returns there occur such phrases as, "Concerning this thought I made three affirmations"; or, "The object of this sermon was," etc.; or, "The positive note in this sermon was," etc.; or, "If this sermon should accomplish its purpose, the hearer will ask himself," etc.; or, "I tried to show that the teaching of Jesus was indeed good tidings," etc.

In reading these sermons, no one can fail to get the impression that most of the preachers thought not exclusively of their subject, but also of the hearts and wills to whom the subject was to be the medicine of divine healing and grace. The ministers did not turn aside for the golden apples of eloquence. They kept in the race for which the prize is simply the ability to help some anxious, perplexed, or sorrowful heart. Their thought is not, "How do I impress people?" or "How does my sermon sound?" but "How can I help these men and women?" "What good can I do them?" "What comfort and strength and courage can I bring them?" These ministers do not preach because they have got to say something, but because they have got something to say.

(2) These sermons are *Scriptural*. Almost without exception they are based upon Biblical texts. Six ministers report that they took no texts, two report that the texts appeared in the middle and not at the beginning of the sermons, five took texts from non-Biblical writers,—from Epictetus, Emerson, Whitman, Stevenson, and Kipling,—three hundred and eighty-eight sermons have texts from the Bible,

a large majority being from the New Testament. There appear to me to be two or three cases of "motto preaching," where a striking phrase, which has no essential truth underlying it, is made to do duty it was never intended for; but in the vast majority of cases the texts are honestly dealt with. In perhaps a score of instances I get the impression that the text is a mere conventional label, and that the sermon was written first and the text chosen afterward; but again, in the vast majority of cases, the abstracts show that the sermons have grown naturally out of the texts, and have vital connection with them.

(3) These sermons are prevailingly *cheerful*. The gospel they set forth is good tidings, not mere good advice. No one in reading these abstracts can fail to receive the conviction that Unitarians are thoroughly evangelical in the best sense of the word. A few of the ministers are inclined to preach a rather damp or foggy gospel; but, as a rule, the preachers shed over it the sunlight of their own convictions, or, rather, the bright reflection of the divine love which they have caught in their own hearts. These men are not blind to the world's suffering and to the marks of its pain and weariness: they are not deaf to the wail of failure and loneliness and grief; but they take these obvious facts of human experience as a challenge, and they recognize that true ministers are ambassadors of a King of love, sent to heal and to cheer. Sermons upon such themes as "A Joyful Religion," "Joy in Believing," etc., help to make us rejoice in the beautiful world we live in, rejoice in the ringing battle of duty, rejoice in the Fatherly love that heaps our lives with blessings. I suppose there are Unitarian ministers who are pessimistic and far from apostolic, there are those who grumble at lack of appreciation and at the tediousness of unimportant posts of service, there are those even who babble about the hopelessness of effort and the downward tendency of all things to a fatal deterioration; but none of these gloomy views appear in the sermons before me. Perhaps a less cheerful note would have been introduced, could I have read the sermons of the ministers who failed to respond to my inquiry. Suffice it that the four hundred sermons under study show a freshness of mind and heart, a wholesomeness of tone, and buoyancy of spirit which well befit the messengers of "The Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God."

(4) These sermons are pre-eminently *Christian*. This fact might be inferred from the fact that they are Scriptural and cheerful, but the additional fact must be noted that a very large proportion of them are based distinctly upon the teaching of Jesus Christ. A brief selection of titles will illustrate this fact:—

“Christ the Way,” “The Christ of To-day,” “The Message of Jesus,” “The Increasing Command for our Love and Reverence for Jesus,” “The Peace of Jesus,” “The Winning Grace of the Gospel,” “The Rediscovery of Christianity,” “The Advancing Christ,” “The Extent and the Severity of the Demands of Jesus Christ.”

One minister expresses what appears to be a very common feeling when he appends to his abstract, “I feel that I ought to connect my preaching more with the teaching and preaching of Jesus.” Another writes of his own purpose and habit what might be written of the preaching of almost all of his fellow-workers: “The controversial or polemical spirit is dead. I assume the supremacy and worth of the religion of Jesus. My preaching is affirmative, vitally enthusiastic, and Christian.”

In order to verify my impression of this marked aspect of Unitarian preaching, I have picked up at random the fifty abstracts lying on the top of the pile. Of these fifty sermons, I find that forty-one make direct reference to the teaching and example of Jesus. When it is remembered that these sermons are reported to me in abstracts which rarely exceed two hundred words, and which are sometimes not more than fifty words in length, the importance of this constant reference to Christian sanctions and inspirations cannot be over-emphasized. I understand now what the good woman meant, who said to one of our ministers: “I have been twenty years a regular attendant at worship in orthodox churches. I have been for one year attending a Unitarian church; and I have heard more about Jesus Christ in that one year than in all the twenty years before.”

So much for these general impressions, as far as they are affirmative; but, in order to complete the picture, I must not fail to speak of one impression that is mainly negative.

(5) I would not have it appear that each and every one

of these sermons is remarkable for excellence. Some display the "effrontery of mediocrity." I have remarked upon the excellence of the abstracts. I ought to add that in a number of instances I have been obliged to confess to myself that the structure is better than the material. The method and order are excellent, while the thought is commonplace. The bones are well knit into a shapely skeleton, but they are dry bones still. Further, I am not so much enamoured of the positive merits of these sermons as to be blind to certain significant defects. I can imagine some of the good hearers of these sermons somnolently saying to themselves, "It is all right and true, but it is nothing particular to me." It might be alleged that this preaching gratifies more than it converts, that it suggests, but does not always convince. It dwells in the temperate zones of feeling and experience, and not in the tropic heat of passion or the frozen stability of logic. It dreams of heaven, but it goes not so deep as hell. It assumes virtue, and is inclined to be blind to the tragedy of sin.

In this curious omission we probably discern the reflection of the conditions under which these sermons were preached. Unitarian congregations are chiefly made up of the class of people called respectable. They are not all as good as they might be, but there are very few miserable sinners among them. Unitarians are not, as a rule, people who are in any serious danger of breaking any of the ten commandments. Their peculiar sins are rather those of indifference, of spiritual apathy, of Pharisaism. They are more apt to leave undone the things they ought to do than to do the things they ought not to do. Probably the ministers were right when they directed their sermons to deepen the spiritual life of the moderately virtuous rather than to arouse or warn the degraded. The omission is also to be accounted for by the loyalty of Unitarians to the method of fulfilment to which I have already alluded. They are so eager to show the more excellent way that they have no time to denounce existing evil. They are cultivating the wheat, confident that in so doing the weeds will be overcome. Their emphasis on the present sanctity of life leaves no room for mention of its depravity. They are zealous to overcome evil with good.

The preachers of past generations used to make a distinction between preaching the law and preaching the gospel. By the law they usually meant the threatenings and penalties of the law, and by the gospel they meant the promise and method of escape from the deserved penalties. The division has ceased to be distinct in our minds; but Christianity is, and always must be, a moral legislation as well as a loving service, and no church can do its full duty which fails to emphasize the restraints of the moral law and the obvious penalties that follow disobedience. Unitarians are not relieved of this duty because they have discovered that laws are natural and beneficent, and that penalties are not arbitrarily inflicted by an angry Deity, but are simply the fruits of a man's own acts. Is it not still the preacher's part to declare the inevitable consequence of wrong-doing, and to disclose in uncompromising fashion the miserable bondage of sin? I get from these Unitarian sermons the impression that the preachers are more fond of declaring that he who sows to the spirit will reap life everlasting than they are of declaring the equal truth, that he who sows to the flesh will reap corruption. They have taken to heart the beautiful counsel of Jeremy Taylor. "Let the business of your sermons be," he said, "to preach holy life, obedience, peace, love among neighbors, to love as the old Christians did, and the new should, to do hurt to no man, to do good to every man; for in these things the honor of God consists, and the kingdom of the Lord Jesus."

II.

I now proceed to a more exact and complete analysis and classification of these four hundred sermons. First, I mark with pleasure the wide-ranging and stimulating variety of the themes. With the one exception just noted, they cover the whole field of experience, and deal in good proportion with the different aspects of truth. Unitarians join together Christian faith and broad philanthropy, close fellowship with God and neighborly service, the personal and spiritual with the public and social, the life that now is with the life eternal. A division into groups must be somewhat arbitrary, and the

boundaries that divide these groups must sometimes be obscure. It remains a fact, however, that in only sixteen instances have I found myself in any serious hesitation as to the general class in which a sermon belongs. It goes without saying that many of the sermons that I have classified as "practical" have a splendid spiritual appeal at the end, and that many a sermon that I have classified as "biographical" has some fine ethical lesson to impart; but the general tendency and tone of each sermon is sufficiently obvious to permit of a more or less accurate classification. A very careful study enables me to report the following general results:—

1. Sermons for Occasions (local or seasonal), 5 per cent.
2. Sermons, biographical or literary, 2 per cent.
3. Sermons of social service or political order, 12 per cent.
4. Sermons doctrinal or denominational, 15 per cent.
5. Sermons ethical and practical, 22 per cent.
6. Sermons of the religious life, 44 per cent.

I proceed to an analysis of these several classes.

(1) OCCASIONAL SERMONS.

Two ministers were engaged on the chosen Sunday in re-organizing their Sunday-schools on the lines laid down in the new Unitarian Handbook, and directed their sermons to interest the families in their congregations in the new departure. In one church a hospital collection was taken, and in another a missionary collection; and the sermons concerned the special importance of these endeavors. Two churches were celebrating anniversaries in the local church history,—an increasing and excellent habit in our churches, which preserves honorable traditions, and gives a background for the endeavors of the present generation. Four ministers made report to their congregations upon the meetings of the local conferences which they had just attended. This also is an excellent habit of growing frequency among our ministers. Twelve ministers used the special message of the autumn season to carry the spiritual truth they wished to convey. The titles indicate the character of these ser-

mons: "The Message of Autumn," "Autumn Leaves," "The Harvest of the Year," "Autumn Leaves and Fruits," "The Glory of the Fading Leaf," etc. As all these sermons draw analogies of the religious life from the life of nature, they might reasonably be included in the class of sermons specifically devoted to the spiritual life; but, owing to their seasonal character, it has seemed best to me to include them among the occasional sermons.

(2) SERMONS BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY.

With two exceptions the sermons of this class were all preached in the evening. The biographical sermons included discourses on the life and work of Joseph Priestley, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Louis Stevenson, and John Fiske. These themes offer a fruitful line of study. Biography is a living epistle, known and read of all men. A minister who aimed only to entertain might, indeed, make unprofitable use of such subjects; but a preacher who seeks in the great characters of history or fiction for testimony to the reality and worth of moral and spiritual idealism can serve the higher interests of humanity in a most effective way. Other sermons of this class described selected books, and drew from them their ethical or religious lessons. A minister who is a good expositor or commentator is a useful person. Is not the habit of expecting a minister always to provide a sermon containing original thought a survival of the days before printing? Is not one of the functions of a good minister to draw the attention of his hearers to good reading? Sermons about good men and good books may serve to discover spiritual truths in regions where their presence has not been suspected by the average hearer, and help him to understand how pervasive and universal are the principles of religion.

(3) SERMONS OF SOCIAL SERVICE OR POLITICAL ORDER.

The character of these sermons can perhaps best be judged by a selection of typical titles: "The Signs of the Times," "The Methods of Progress," "Social Personality," "Public Temptations," "The Social Mission of the

Church," "National Co-operation for Social Betterment," "National Righteousness," "Democracy and Anarchy," "The Salvation of the Republic," "The Religion of Humanity," "Man's Inhumanity to Man," "Municipal Reform," "Prison Reform."

Of these sermons it may be said that they are sane and impartial studies of serious problems. They are just in spirit and self-controlled in utterance. They do not, as a rule, advocate special remedies for social ills; and they do not propose complete solutions for social problems. These ministers are not the agents of any political party or the champions of particular schemes of social regeneration. In the midst of that which is changing they bear witness to that which is changeless. They minister to men of their own time, but they minister truths that belong to all time. They do not attempt to dispel all the perplexities which beset the men of our generation, but they have good counsel for the hearts and consciences of their fellow-citizens.

I mark, however, in this group of sermons a less certain note than elsewhere. The ministers who preach on social reforms are inclined to obey the apostolic injunction, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." There is sometimes an almost sentimental form of speech, which calls abominable sins "diseases," or bigoted intolerance "a mistake in judgment." These ministers are always in the right, but somewhat amiably in the right. The praise of charity is in their mouths; but is the sword of the spirit in their hands? They plead for succor for the oppressed; but have they fought the oppressor? We want no offensive pugnacity or cynical disdain, but there is such a thing as making preaching too soft. A true social idealism ought perhaps to kindle more of the warrior spirit. Yet I would not be unjust or blind to the positive merits of these impartial sermons. I recognize that I am dealing only with the abstracts of the sermons, and that it is practically impossible to put the evidences of moral passion into an abstract. There is good reason, too, for declining to speak with dogmatic assurance on these themes. The church has too often been brought into disrepute by the utterances of ministers who have spoken about vexed social problems without sufficient acquaintance with economic facts and laws. If there is a

hesitating note in these sermons, it is doubtless due not to timidity or lack of moral courage, but to a wise modesty. Self-control is, after all, a characteristic trait of the habit of mind we call Unitarian. Enthusiasm, like steam, is most efficient when under restraint. Unitarians avoid passionate speech because they know that exaggeration is always an indication of weakness. They are tolerant because they are sure: they are patient because they are strong. Said Stopford Brooke, "The work which is done by ardor married to temperance is the most suggestive, the most kindling; for ardor is deepened by temperance and temperance is kept warm by ardor."

(4) SERMONS DOCTRINAL AND DENOMINATIONAL.

A characteristic of this class of sermons is the tendency to set them in series. About one-third of all the sermons of this group appear in connection with other sermons on related topics. Thus eight ministers were engaged in preaching series of sermons upon "Our Faith," setting forth the special Unitarian message under the familiar headings sometimes called "The Five Points of Unitarianism."

Of the more exclusively denominational sermons, the following titles may be taken as typical: "Our Unitarian Heritage," "Our Unitarian Mission," "What the Unitarian Church Stands for," "The Larger Unitarianism," "Freedom, the Method in Religion."

The more distinctly theological sermons concern themselves chiefly with two of the most perplexing problems of theological study. Seven sermons deal directly with the problem of evil, mostly under that exact title. Five sermons deal with the mission of prayer. It is impossible to accuse Unitarian ministers of evading difficult questions. There is in these doctrinal sermons no deficiency of intellectual candor. Unitarian ministers enjoy the inestimable privilege of freedom. Their congregations put upon them no bonds of opinion or form, and assume no fixity of theological standard. Ministers and people alike are animated by sincere desire for truth. They do not deal in the vice of vagueness. They are candid of speech, honest of purpose, unfettered, expectant.

It is significant to note that there is not a single sermon on "The Trinity," and that only one sermon in the four hundred deals with a subject which was once common in our pulpits, "The Relation of Science and Religion." It is obvious that this is no longer a live question for our ministers. The results of scientific inquiry and the principles of the scientific method have been absolutely accepted, and found to confirm the postulates of pure Christianity.

(5) SERMONS ETHICAL AND PRACTICAL.

The sermons of this class are well defined in the description of his discourse given by one minister. "A simple, direct, practical sermon, twenty-five minutes long." A characteristic of this class of sermons is their aim to reach a particular class of people. They are addressed "to Business men," "to Toilers," "to Working-women," "to Young People," etc.

Here, again, a courage of conviction is pre-eminent in the preachers. Like the apostles of old, these preachers "reason of righteousness." They do not fence with imaginary enemies. Again a selection of titles may indicate the character of this group. They are sermons of ethical endeavor; as, "Practical Religion," "The Gospel of Action," "Ethical Earnestness," "The Straight Life," "Conscience in Business," "Substitutes for Conscience," "Successful Failure," "Sincerity and Stability."

Or they are sermons concerning the value of certain virtues; as, "An Amiable Disposition," "Nature's Masterpiece, a Friend," "Sympathy," "The Law of Kindness."

Or they are sermons concerning certain faults of character; as, "The Sin of Irresponsible Talk," "A Shylock of Words," "Envy," "Over-anxiety," "Thou shalt not Covet."

Such sermons work creatively to upbuild character. They touch the springs of sympathy, they inspire daring resolution. They communicate power. They make duty attractive. They winsomely persuade us to that wide-reaching sympathy which makes us the lovers and servants of our kind, and allure us from the seclusion of our individuality out to the field of public-spirited endeavor.

(6) SERMONS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

As this class includes nearly half of all the material under analysis, I shall be obliged to give a considerable number of titles in order to justify myself in assigning so many sermons to this particular group. I might have called this group *Sermons on the Capacity of Man to live Religiously, or on Spiritual Instincts*, and let the following titles suggest their quality: "The Prophetic Sense," "The Spiritual Sense," "The Religious Instinct," "Soul Power," "Knowing God," "Knowing God and being known of God," "The Life of God in the Soul of Man," "The Power of the Spirit of God," "The Gospel of God."

Or I might have called this group *Sermons of Spiritual Experience*, as the following titles may indicate: "The Abundant Life," "The Religious Life," "The Deeper Life," "The Higher Life," "The Mystery of Godliness," "The Sanctities of Life," "The Power of an Endless Life," "The Practice of the Presence of God," "The Enrichment of Personality," "Inalienable Duties," "The Practical Quality of Eternal Life," "The Necessity of the Superfluous."

Or I might have called this group *Sermons of Spiritual Discernment*. The following titles will give reason for such a classification: "Insight and Outlook," "Spiritual Discernment," "Leadings of Light," "Spiritual Emancipation," "Unrecognized Allies in working for Righteousness," "Fighting with and fighting against Heavenly Powers," "On the Heights," "The Mountain and the Plain," "The Gate Beautiful," "The Home of the Soul," "Journeyings to Jerusalem," "The Two Realms in which Man has his Being."

Or I might have called this group of sermons *Sermons of Faith, Hope, and Love*; for in this class we have such discourses as these on "Faith," "The Rest of Knowledge, Faith, and Obedience," "Religious Faith," "The Believing Heart," "Hope," "The Practical Benefits of Hopefulness," "Service and Self-forgetfulness," "Fervent in Spirit," "Vital Religion."

"There are three forms," said Dr. Munger, "pertaining to the Christian truths. They are true as facts; they are true as doctrines intellectually comprehended; they are true as spiritual experiences to be realized." My inquiry seems to

prove that it is the third aspect of truth that Unitarians are especially emphasizing. They conceive that only as truth takes spiritual form can it come with persuasive power into the hearts of men. These ministers are searching the deep things of God and reporting what they have discovered. They preach a faith which is the evidence of things not seen. They endeavor to set forth the spiritual meaning and interpretation of assured facts. They put, as it were, the candle of the Lord within the ordinary things we see, and make them glow with light. They believe that the world of faith and imagination and idealism is more real, actual, and intense than any of the so-called realities of men's lives. They realize how the things that are foolishness to the natural man can yet be spiritually discerned.

I cannot but believe that this is the teaching which the needs of this generation most demand. A revival of rational idealism is the first requisite of our hurrying generation, and of a land too much enslaved to a prevalent materialism. It is the privilege of the Christian ministry to bring to men who are falling into the prison of that materialism the emancipating force of larger vision and expectation; to teach them how to transfigure and glorify their very materialism, so that it shall not be a pillar of cloud concealing divine realities, but a pillar of fire revealing them. This idealism is not merely a sentiment or a matter of contemplation. It is not a thing to be merely looked at, like the electricity of the Aurora borealis, which irradiates the northern sky with transient beauty. It is, as these ministers interpret it, a thing to be harnessed and utilized, like the electricity that does the work of daily life. The idealism that is an active inspiration, that lifts us out of despondency and out of weariness with trifles, that calms our restlessness, that shames our indifference, that prophecies our blessedness,—that is the Unitarian gospel.

At the seventy-fifth anniversary of the American Unitarian Association the preacher of the anniversary sermon took for his theme "The Church of the Spirit," and with keen historical sense and convincing argument he traced our spiritual lineage, and feelingly persuaded us what indeed we are. "The Unitarians," said Dr. Peabody, "are mystics. They have contended for theological simplicity, they have

contributed to Biblical interpretation ; but the representative expressions of their habit of mind are to be sought, not in these fields of learning, but in their witness of the present life of God in the present life of man." Superficial observers within and without our own communion have failed to discern the truth of that statement. They have imagined that the peculiar genius of our body is something far apart from the task of preserving unbroken the continuity of the spiritual history of the Christian centuries. They have thought of Unitarianism as a form of theological dissent, or as a protest against prevailing doctrinal error, or as a philosophical rationalism, or as a proclamation of reason and common sense in religion. In all these varied forms of thought and activity, Unitarianism has had its place and its necessary work ; but, fundamentally, it is none of these things. The result of my inquiry into the characteristics of Unitarian preaching is to demonstrate the entire accuracy of Dr. Peabody's statement: "The Unitarians are mystics. They may have their place in defining the sources of authority, they may do their part in establishing the rule of righteousness, but their interior spirit is that of an unobscured and uninterrupted relation of the soul of man with the life of God."

Do we not discover here the reason for a fact that has puzzled many of the critics of the Unitarian movement,—the fact that beyond all other forms of Christian faith it has expressed its inner spirit in poetry? This lyric utterance now appears as the natural and dominant note of the Unitarian gospel. Unitarianism is not merely an intellectual revolt: it is fundamentally a revival of spiritual life. It is through a clear relation of cause and effect that our faith finds its most characteristic expressions in hymns like Sarah Flower Adams's "Nearer, my God, to thee," or Eliza Scudder's "O Life within my life than self more near," or Samuel Johnson's "Father, in thy mysterious presence kneeling," or a hundred others of the same poetic merit and deep religious significance. "It is not by accident that the lyrics of Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Bryant, and Emerson, proceed from lives bred in the rational piety of the Unitarians, or that Whittier, who must be joined with them in the character of his verse, was joined with them also in the

fellowship of the 'Inner Light.' And, when we pass from the great masters, what does it mean that from a group of minor poets of the same tradition — from Samuel Longfellow and Furness and Hedge and many others among the elders, from Hosmer, Gannett, and Chadwick, and many others of the present generation — there has proceeded a strain of lyric theism whose music penetrates many a church whose doors are closed against the poets? It means that beneath the vigorous rationalism and sincere dissent of the Unitarians there is a deeper movement of religious life, a consciousness of God which none but a poet can utter, a spiritual lineage which unites these modern minds to the great company of witnesses of the real presence,—the fellowship of the Church of the Spirit."

I venture to believe that the result of my inquiry is thus to deliver us from the fear of our numerical insignificance. We are lifted out of provinciality, out of dissent, and made to recognize a large community of interest. We rightfully belong in the great fellowship of those who would live in the spirit, and would feel beneath them the support of the everlasting arms. We may continue to contend for liberty of opinion, for candid truth-seeking, for democracy in organization, for righteousness in public and private life. We may continue, in short, to be disputants and moralists; and for such high ends we may be content to remain a free and protesting minority. But we recognize that our "greater privilege and more imperative summons is to transmit the witness of the spirit of the truth which shall guide men into richer revelations than it is possible for any single sect to teach or dream." We are caught up into the company of those who in all ages and lands "hunger and thirst after righteousness," trust in the living God, and try to make his kingdom come on earth.

Liberal Christianity in the United States

By SAMUEL A. ELIOT, D.D.

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BOSTON
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LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY IN THE UNITED STATES.

The founders of the American Commonwealth were men who brought to the New World the best wisdom of the Old. The free State, the free Church, and the free School are the gifts to America of Puritan England and of the United States of the Netherlands. Spanish soldiers of fortune first landed on our southern shores, but left no permanent impression save of ruin and misery. The bold adventurers of France first explored the northern wilderness, and planted the fleur-de-lis on the rock of Quebec; but it is one of the most fortunate circumstances in human history that the colonization of the country was delayed until after the period of the Reformation, and especially until after the heroic struggle for liberty in the Netherlands and the rise of Puritanism in England. The planters of New England and New Netherlands were men trained in the principles of resistance alike to arbitrary civil power and to ecclesiastical authority. From that origin America derives its inheritance of complete religious toleration,—a principle not only embodied in the National Constitution, but established in all the habits and convictions of

the people. The creation and support of religious institutions in America is committed to the intelligence, energy, and good will of the people who voluntarily associate themselves for religious purposes. No government has either the will or the power to levy taxes for the support of churches, to prescribe systems of doctrine or forms of worship, to enforce discipline and uniformity. Every method of ecclesiastical organization and all forms of religious thought are represented among the hundred or more Christian denominations, but no one denomination contains more than a tenth of the population. All have equal privileges, but no church has any other right to exist than that it satisfies some longing of the human soul. As a rule, Christian ministers in America are judged just as other men are,—by their abilities, character, and public usefulness,—and our churches are valued for the inspiration and comfort which they afford to their adherents and for the service which they render to the community.

The dominant influence in American Christianity is Protestant, orthodox and evangelical. The most potent force in American life has been wielded by the descendants of those brave children of Calvin's spirit who vainly struggled for freedom of worship against English king and bishop, were nourished and taught in hospitable Leyden, and finally sailed prayerfully across the wintry sea to found a commonwealth upon the principle of equal rights. When the Mayflower Company landed, all knelt

together on the strand, and William Brewster prayed for God's blessing on their hazardous adventure. The answer to that prayer is to be read in the self-reliant congregations, schools, and colleges, in the self-governing communities that from the pine-clad Katahdin to the Golden Gate of the Pacific Sea gather millions of people into a church without a bishop and a state without a king.

I do not affirm that the Puritan conceived his own principles in their amplitude and final application. He was a man of the seventeenth century, not of the twentieth century. He meant to found a theocracy, but that brotherhood of equal rights we call democracy was in the inexorable though unconscious logic of his creed. "By their fruits," we read, not by their roots, "shall ye know them." In the chill April days, under the matted leaves of the Plymouth woods, you will find masses of tough and fibrous roots. The flower that springs from them is the sweetest of the year. The root is hard and rough, but the blossom is the mayflower. The root of Puritanism was a harsh theology, but the flower was civil and religious liberty. The blood of New England flows to-day in the veins of every state, and largely determines the character of American institutions. As on this autumn day the fresh sea wind blowing from the New England shore breathes health into many an inland valley, so the penetrating influence of the Puritan principle has been felt in every part and crisis of the nation's life.

I do not need to say that the original Calvinism of the Puritan churches has been profoundly modified, not only by the influences which are common to all civilized lands, but also by the special political theories and habits of the American people, and by the social conditions of new and rapidly growing communities. No religious body in America is precisely like the denomination which may bear the same name and acknowledge the same confession in Europe. In New England itself Calvinism has disappeared. The original churches of the Pilgrims and Puritans are almost all Unitarian in faith and fellowship, while the so-called Orthodox churches are almost equally liberal in theology and flexible in organization. The prevailing Protestantism of the Middle and Western States is increasingly broad and catholic. Each one of the great Protestant denominations has been rent with schism. The Methodists are split into a dozen different bodies, the Baptists into as many more. The Cumberland Presbyterians represent a revolt from the Calvinism of the old-school Presbyterians; the reformed Episcopalians, a revolt from certain rubrics and phrases of the Prayer Book; the Protestant Methodists, a revolt from the Episcopate; the Unitarians, a revolt from the tritheism and dreadful teaching of human depravity which characterized eighteenth-century Congregationalism. In each and every case the main body, instead of reverting to bigotry by the expulsion of its more progressive elements, has girded up its loins, and followed hard after its own

heretics. It is safe to say that the Unitarian schism in the Congregational churches, inevitable a century ago, would be impossible to-day. The Presbyterian Church has just succeeded in enacting certain radical amendments to the Westminster Confession. The Methodist and Episcopal Churches witness a steady decrease in the power of their bishops. The preaching in all Protestant pulpits becomes less and less doctrinal and more practical. Steadily in that conflict which Carlyle called "the struggle of men intent on the real essence of things against men intent on the forms and semblances of things" the victory tends to the side of those whose trust is in the light of reality. With increase of knowledge and the pressure of social problems the emphasis of the doctrinal teaching changes from the sovereignty of God to the Fatherhood of God, from the privileges of the elect to the rights of the brotherhood of man. The higher criticism of the Bible is taught in all but one of the Protestant theological schools of the Northern States. The study of the ethics of social questions more and more takes equal rank in the education of ministers with the study of theology. Conversion in most Protestant communions has come to mean nothing more than a decision to seek the truth and do the good. Regeneration has come to be regarded as a process of spiritual education, salvation as "a growth out of selfishness into service." As to future destiny, the prevalent teaching of the Protestant Church is either a frank Universalism or a non-committal statement which looks

any way except toward the old stern belief in endless punishment.

While these churches have thus gained immensely—and still are growing—in breadth of view, in humane sympathies, and in self-government, it may be questioned if they have also gained in ethical spiritual vitality. It may reasonably be doubted if the present ministers and members of the orthodox churches are equal in loyalty to truth and in the spirit of self-sacrifice to the men and women whose convictions were shaped by a severer creed and whose characters were disciplined in a more rigorous social and religious climate. The grave peril that confronts the orthodox churches to-day is that of insincere conformity. It would be easy to point out the scholarly deficiencies and the discrepancies between creed and practice. It would be easy to show the serious difficulties in which the professedly orthodox ministers and churches find themselves when they try to make new wine stay in their old bottles, to harmonize antiquated formulas and modern knowledge, to make seventeenth-century phrases express twentieth-century ideas; but to assail a great religious party just when it is struggling to adapt itself to higher truths and larger usefulness is too ungenerous a task. Let it suffice that the prevailing forces in orthodox Protestantism are generally liberal, tending to purify doctrinal systems, to popularize church government, and to elevate righteousness of life above dogmatic accuracy of belief.

Besides the dominant Evangelical Protestantism two other important influences work in American religious life,—on the one hand the Roman Catholic Church and on the other hand the independent churches or fellowships which avowedly represent liberal Christianity. The Church of Rome has had a wonderful career in the United States. When the American government was established, the adherents of the Roman see were numbered as the least of the sectaries: they now constitute the largest single denomination. No stronger testimony to the power and discipline of the Roman order can be discovered than the rapid and thorough way in which, with slender resources, parishes and schools have been organized and equipped. The achievement of the Catholic Church in receiving and caring for the great masses of emigrants of diverse nationalities and tongues has been an exhibition of incomparable administrative ability. The unconscious action and reaction between Catholics and Protestants in America has been healthy. The Catholics have taught the Protestants how to study the infinite varieties of human nature, how to have compassion on the multitude, and how to call noble music to the aid of devotion. They have shown us the folly of taking away their playthings from spiritual children and of permitting the devil to have all the good tunes. They have helped to mitigate the dulness of the Calvinistic Sabbath and to glorify social enjoyment and good cheer. Above all, they have defended the clinging love that refuses to be-

lieve in any great gulf set between our souls and the beloved dead. They have wisely interpreted the deep instinct of the human heart which believes in the communion of saints. The mediæval elements in Catholic creed and worship have been profoundly modified by contact with democratic conditions. The Roman Church in America differs materially from the Roman Church of Italy, Spain, or Belgium. At first almost exclusively a foreign church, both in priesthood and in laity, it more and more takes its normal place as a permanent element in American life. The priesthood is now chiefly recruited from American-born youth who receive their training in their native land and who are generally as ardently patriotic as the sons of Pilgrims themselves.

The Roman Church has indeed at times been found in opposition to the American school system, and its priests have occasionally dabbled injudiciously in politics; but it is almost always to be found a stout fighter for temperance and for economy in public administration. It is divided from Protestantism by fundamental intellectual disagreements, but American Protestants must gratefully recognize that for a great mass of their fellow-citizens the Catholic Church performs a service which no Protestant church is fitted to render. For those who have little power to think for themselves a church that can teach them how to obey is indispensable. The Roman discipline often unfolds a saintliness that may well bow our hearts in respect.

If it upholds a doctrine of the priesthood and the sacraments which obscures the light of the Christian gospel, if it grossly carnalizes religion, its very bigotry is exercised in a cause in which all Christians are enlisted. The earnest Catholic holds to his sacramental theories, because he believes that through the mass the eternal life of God can be made the actual possession of men. If we have another way to God, let us not fail to recognize that, though by different paths, we are "urged by one great motive to the same great end."

At the other extreme from Roman Catholicism are the free and independent churches that are fearless in their devotion to truth, and whose chief interest lies, not in doctrines or ceremonies, but in the worship of the heart and in the cultivation of the life of integrity, purity, and public serviceableness. The liberal forces in American Christianity are not confined to any one denomination or group of churches. They appear sporadically, but unmistakably, in all the churches, even in the great ecclesiastical corporations themselves. The liberal communion is the fellowship of all those who are intellectually hospitable, who do not fear that investigation can discover any poverty in God, who assign the seat of authority in religion neither to infallible church nor infallible book, but to the reason and spiritual capacity of man. The liberal forces have found their largest scope in the churches that are congregational in polity. I should not, however, fail to testify that the gospel of the Inner

Light, to which the Society of Friends has borne brave and quiet testimony, has been not the least of the liberalizing tendencies as well as one of the purest moral influences in America. The sweetness of domestic life, the promotion of peace and all progressive social reforms, owe an incalculable debt to the Quaker. I should also bear witness to the ethical contribution which Reformed Judaism—proportionally, the wealthiest religious communion in America—has made to the national life. The Reformed Jews have set high standards of education and family devotion, and they have set in motion the wisest and most thorough systems of charity. The recent development of the movement most inaccurately entitled Christian Science has been, on the whole, beneficial. It is entangled in a deplorable charlatanism and involved in most unscientific practices; but its fundamental philosophy, when cleared from the fog of verbiage, is found to be sane and broad, so that its general influence is undeniably wholesome. The simplicity of the gospel of Christ is, however, best represented by the fellowships called Unitarian and Universalist, a little company of perhaps a quarter of a million people gathered into some thousand independent congregations, with their chief strength in New England, but well represented in all the Northern and Pacific States, and sparsely in the Southern States.

These free churches find their justification for being in no passion for dissent or freak of wilfulness. They are the natural product of the good

soil of Protestantism, and represent the Puritan principle in its highest development. Their distinctive teaching is the assertion that the finite spirit may hold communion with the infinite Spirit without any mediation. The free churches build upon the faith that God is manifest in human life. They do not seek to make ends of themselves, but to provide the means of quickening the higher feelings and faculties. They seek to guide life in clean and honest ways, and to consecrate intellectual and material resources to the glory of God by securing them to wise human uses. They preserve Christianity from being narrowed by priestly or scholastic interpretations. They refuse to allow religion to separate itself from other human interests. They collect the best wisdom of all lands and times, and with it feed the altar fires of the living God. I do not say that they have attained their ideal, but toward that ideal they tend, mightily assured that, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,"—not the false liberty which means lawlessness and breeds chaos, but the liberty of sonship, of service, and of growth.

The free churches disarm certain natural prejudices against religion by allying it with common sense, with the best instincts of the heart, and with the happy service of the brotherhood of man. They set forth a religion for daily life, and believe in the educational value of happiness. They hold to the naturalness of Christianity. They take for granted the divine life and longing in the hearts of

men and women, and seek to quicken it by association and common work and worship. Their force is as that of a stream flowing from a mountain height, which is feeble in origin, which may be here delayed and there for a moment diverted, now vexed with rapids and then calm in monotony, which takes to itself tributary streams and is refreshed by their brightness, which turns the busy wheels of human activity, and finally finds its expanded power in the great eternal sea.

More and more these free churches, whatever their name or denominational allegiance, are coming into conscious sympathy and co-operation. There are diversities of gift among them, but the same spirit. There are differences of emphasis and operation, but their intellectual agreements and spiritual affinities are increasingly manifest. They are urged to unity by outward pressure as well as by inward attraction. Sacerdotalism and materialism are arrogant foes that beset them on either hand. Of the prevalence of the commercial and secular spirit I need say little. Such as it is, it makes itself sufficiently apparent to the most superficial observer of American life. Americans sometimes appear to be engrossed in trade and money-making, but it will not do to take this aspect of American life too seriously. Materialism comes up against the citadels of Christian theism with the noise and boast and flaunting array of Sennacherib against the cities of Judah, and sometimes, in these days of our amazing commercial activity, it seems

as if "Prosperity" were deified and the eyes of the people were dazzled by the new glory, and their hearts won by the invader's promise of riches and empire; but already, as to the Assyrian of old, is the word of the prophet being fulfilled,— "By the way that he came up, by the same way shall he return." There is no permanent peril to the deeper life of the people in the gusts of commercial passion that sweep periodically across the marts of trade. The soil that to-day brings forth the largest crop of weeds will perhaps to-morrow bear the richest spiritual harvest.

Sacerdotalism is a more unnatural phenomenon in American life. Its power is small, but its pretensions are great. In the Protestant Episcopal Church it is constantly growing in influence. It appears to furnish a religious home for some devout and submissive souls who need in their religious life the crutch of stated observances. It commends itself by the self-sacrificing though often injudicious labors of its priestly adherents in behalf of the poor of the cities. But its piety lacks the quality of robust manliness. It deifies correctness of speech and attitude, and represses individuality. It is fundamentally in opposition to the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. It interposes semi-magical mediators between the Father God and those who ought to be his fearless children. It really belongs within the fold of the Roman Church, of which it is a mutilated copy. It cannot but prove to be a temporary reaction against

the prevailing liberalizing tendencies that characterize American Christianity.

What are the facts which justify a confidence that the free churches represent the type of Christian thought and organization that will prevail in America? I leave out, for want of time, the influences which are everywhere at work,—the time spirit, the spread of democratic institutions, the growth of the scientific habit of mind. Let me speak only of the influences that have peculiar potency in the United States.

1. I mention first the absence of all legal and statutory barriers. Under the practice of universal toleration there is absolute freedom to grow and expand. The social ostracism of dissenters is unknown in America save in immature communities. The liberal churches have only to overcome the opposition of orthodox prejudice or misunderstanding. If they fail in this new century to lead the intellectual and spiritual life of the nation, it will be because of their own inertness and unworthiness, because they have been "disobedient to the heavenly vision."

2. I mention the fact that the Congregational polity of church government is best adapted to the political and social life of a republic. The great ecclesiastical corporations, whether Catholic or Protestant, are at great initial disadvantage. All American institutions require constant readjustment to the changing needs and beliefs of a mobile people. A dogmatic system that admits of no reform

is an anachronism in a democracy. It is only a free church that breathes naturally in the atmosphere of a free state. The two grew up together, and are still interdependent. Further, any church that endeavors to transplant to America class distinctions or clerical pretensions is an alien in a land where every man carries his sovereignty under his own hat. The Roman, Anglican, and Lutheran communions all suffer from this handicap; while the independent churches which are governed by their own local constituencies, which determine their own covenants and choose their own ministers, find themselves in accord with their environment and close to the national heart. The Church that is self-reliant in administration, elastic in doctrinal system, that founds its ministry not on any fiction of apostolic succession, but on sincere and Christian manhood, that describes itself as a company of the disciples of Jesus Christ united for the worship of God and the service of men,—that Church will possess the future if it is faithful to its opportunity.

3. I venture to say that American family life has a quality of tender devotion and considerate courtesy which is not indeed unknown elsewhere, but which is pervasive in America. The relations of husband and wife and of parents and children are generally just and gentle. The moral standards that guide family life are Puritanic in origin, and retain their potency; but the Puritan severity has entirely disappeared from the family discipline. It has been supplanted by a freedom and a demonstra-

tive good will which sometimes seems slack to critics of sterner mood. Now the Christian life is much more a matter of the heart than of the head. Its root and type are in family love. The growth of tenderness and justice in domestic life cannot fail to make American Christianity equally just and kind and brotherly.

4. There are some traits of character that are conspicuously American, and which contribute to the overthrow of false ideas about religion and the spread of ideas, which are, indeed, as old in theory and utterance as the Christian gospel, but which are new in realization. They are, moreover, like all the special influences I have mentioned, the possession of women as well as men. The characteristic American love of humor and power of ridicule helps to bring all infallibilities to their doom. Many of the old errors are more readily laughed out of court than argued out. Dogmatic certainties and ecclesiastical arrogance are the easy victims of a pointed joke. All inflated claims and pretensions are quickly punctured by the needle point of wit. The good spirit of laughter is on the liberal side.

Again, the American is naturally an optimist. His temperament and his experience alike persuade him to look on the bright side of things. His instincts favor belief in a cheerful and humane form of religion. The American has not the Scotchman's love for gloomy theological speculation, or the German's scholarly patience and industry, or the Frenchman's vivacious imagination. He pays alle-

giance to a religion that does something, and does it quickly and efficiently. Again, he is not averse to novelties. He approaches new ideas with a cheerful confidence such as no other people exhibit. Many highly cultivated people in Europe are temperamentally conservative, and the persistence of established churches and conventional usages and outgrown dogmas is due to the fact that the best people are opposed to changes of which it is impossible to foretell the outcome; but for us Americans so many new experiences have proved to be fortunate experiences that we are not disposed to regard novelties with distrust. Our continent is new, and has proved marvellously rich. Our laws are novel, and have promoted human welfare and happiness. Our political machinery is an experiment, and it works well. Our people have pushed into unexplored territories, and made them the abode of happy millions. The untried is therefore to us desirable rather than suspicious. A confident expectation of good characterizes the American, and qualifies him to receive and adopt happier faiths and larger hopes.

5. The brief but already historic record of the free churches commends them to popular approval. Their just pride is in the type of character they produce and in the men and women they have developed for the public service. The temperament which makes a man an independent in his religious thinking is usually the temperament which makes a man a leader in any occupation to which he gives himself. To an unparalleled degree the men and

women trained in the fellowship of the free churches have served the cause of education, of philanthropy and reform, of literature, art, and science. I will not weary you with the recitation of the deeds of these men and women, I will not read the long lists of distinguished names. They are known of all who read American history. Suffice it that the fruits of liberal Christianity are plentiful and good and that the forms of faith and government practised by the free churches have proved their capacity to produce America's chosen leaders in almost every walk of life.

It is not for me in this presence to glorify these churches that I love, or that dear land of which they are the flower and pledge of spiritual harvest. I do not ask your praise for them; but I do ask you for your confidence, your co-operation, and your prayers of affectionate good will. May I not ask that the brethren who are bound with us in the control of the law of liberty, whatever their name or nationality or tongue, will pray for a blessing on their comrades far across the sea,—on the quiet homes wherein the new generation is being trained in simplicity and righteousness; on the congregations which after the way men call heresy worship the God of their fathers; on their unconstrained religious life; on their eager search for truth,—that these churches may justify their noblest hopes, and prove fit channels for the inspiration of the living God, declaring his messages, transmitting his healing ministries, entering into his abundant life, and rejoicing in his never-failing love.

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